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An original novel by **WILLIAM JOHNSTON**
based on the delightful **ABC-TV** series

Nanny and the Professor #2

What Hath Nanny Wrought?

The Everett family needed miracles to carry out all their summer do-good plans. Could they fail to happen with Nanny around?

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NANNY PLAYS IT COOL

"That was magnificent!" Ferenci Valnaps exclaimed. "You've solved a pollution problem! "But how did you get that machine to pump peanut skins back into the factory instead of into the river?"

Nanny laughed. "You think *I* did that? That's impossible—if you think about it. I was in Mr. McCartle's office, while the machine was . . . well, wherever it was."

But Ferenci remained puzzled. "I don't know . . ." he said slowly. "I think there's something otherworldly about you."

"No one ever has really understood the British," Nanny mused.

What Hath Nanny Wrought?

WILLIAM JOHNSTON

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A LANCER BOOK

WHAT HATH NANNY WROUGHT

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CHAPTER ONE

It was the kind of morning that happened only once a year in the Everett household. The whole family was at breakfast at the same time. Every face was shiny-bright with anticipation. There was an atmosphere of get-up-and-go.

Miss Figalilly, the very pert and pretty young lady who served the family as all-around everything but who preferred the simple title of Nanny, had not witnessed the phenomenon before, since she had been with the Everetts slightly less than a year. Consequently, she was, to say the least, puzzled by what she saw. It was to her credit, a result, possibly, of her traditional British upbringing, that the sight of all those shiny-bright faces at the breakfast table did not turn her irrevocably anti-American.

"I wonder . . . is today my birthday?" Nanny

asked, standing at the end of the table and addressing the Everetts.

The Everetts, the father and the three children, looked back at Nanny in the same way that she was looking at them: puzzledly.

Professor Everett, who was dark-haired, good-looking and relatively young considering that he was a university instructor and a respected scientist, finally answered.

"If it is, it's news to me," he replied. "Don't *you* know?"

"Well, I *thought* I did," Nanny said. "But, when I entered the breakfast room just now and saw this—all of you at the table and with your breakfast already prepared and looking like a convention of Sweepstakes winners, the notion struck me that something was going on that I didn't know about. 'Is it my birthday?' I asked myself."

Prudence, the girl, who was six, spoke next. "Why did you think that, Nanny?" she asked. "We're not having birthday cake for breakfast."

"Well, because it occurred to me that this might be my birthday gift," Nanny replied. "Normally, you see, your father is the only one of you who's able to get to the table in the morning without being prodded, called several times, or threatened. But, today, here you all are, chipper and cheery. What a lovely gift for me, not to have to blast you out of your beds, not to have to coerce you to face your cornflakes."

"Who wants to stay in bed?" Butch, the youngest boy, said. "This is vacation."

Nanny brightened. "Ahhhhhh!"

"We have the whole school year to hate to get out of bed in the morning," Hal, the oldest boy, who was twelve, explained. "Why waste your time hating to get up in the morning when you don't have to?"

"Understand now?" the Professor said to Nanny, smiling.

"Oh, yes," she nodded. "It's all crystal clear. I just forgot that today is the first day of vacation. Now that I remember, I'm surprised that you weren't all up much earlier. I imagine you have great plans. The whole summer ahead of you, oodles of things to do. It explains the eager looks on your faces. You just can't wait to get started, can you?"

"Boy, you know it," Hal replied.

"I didn't sleep a wink last night, thinking about today," Prudence said.

"I haven't had any sleep for a *whole week*, thinking about today," Butch said.

Nanny beamed, delighted. "And what's first on the schedule?" she asked.

Silence.

Hal finally spoke again. "A schedule is what you have when school is open," he said. "You don't have a schedule when it's vacation time and school is closed. You just do whatever you want to, whenever you want to. That's the whole idea."

"That's right," Professor Everett said to Nanny. "Lazy days of summer, you know. You've heard of that."

Nanny looked perplexed again. "But, uh, this bright-and-early bounding out of bed . . . this eagerness to be done with breakfast . . . you must have some objective in mind."

"Sure," Butch said. "Stuff."

"Stuff?"

"I don't know about them," Butch replied, indicating his brother and sister, "but that's what I'm going to do. Stuff."

"Stuff like what?" Nanny inquired.

"Like . . . uh . . ." Butch shrugged, "I don't know, maybe like fry myself on the sidewalk."

"Is that a game?"

Hal and Prudence laughed.

"It isn't a game like Monopoly, if that's what you mean," Butch replied to Nanny. "What you do is, on a real hot day when the sun is about a thousand degrees, you spread yourself out on the sidewalk and fry yourself."

"What a lovely way to spend the summer," Nanny said. "And so beneficial."

"I think you're missing the point," Professor Everett said to Nanny. "The whole purpose of a vacation is to rest and relax."

"Oh, I understand that," Nanny answered. "What baffles me is why a person would feel compelled to get up earlier than usual in the morning to begin resting and relaxing, if that's what frying oneself on the sidewalk can properly be called. Why not simply stay in bed and do it?"

"How would you get the sidewalk into the bed?" Butch inquired.

The others ignored his question.

"I see what you mean," Professor Everett said to Nanny. "It *does* sound a little . . . a little . . . well, a little, uh . . ."

"Stupid?" Prudence suggested.

The Professor winced. "'Illogical' is the word I was thinking of," he replied. He addressed Nanny again. "But it sounds that way, I imagine," he said, "only because you don't have all the facts. Based on the information you have, it sounds as if we're all going to spend the whole summer frying ourselves on the sidewalk. That, of course, is not true. Not even Butch is going to spend the whole summer frying.

And Hal and Prudence, I'm sure, have better things to do."

Nanny faced Hal.

"I'll probably do a lot of swimming," he said.

"Hal, I don't want you going to the beach. Not until they do something about that pollution," the Professor said.

"Oh, yeah, I forgot about that," Hal replied, disappointed. He faced Nanny again. "In that case, I'll probably do a lot of reading," he said.

Nanny looked at him skeptically.

"I'm not *positive* I'll do a lot of reading," he admitted. "But if I don't, I'll think of something to do. Maybe I'll do some thinking. Thinking is something."

"I do a lot of thinking when I'm frying," Butch said.

"That's interesting—frying on the sidewalk as an aid to meditation," his father said. "What sort of thoughts do you think?"

"Things like—'Boy, if I stay here one more second, I'm going to burn to a crisp,' " Butch answered.

Without making any further comment, Professor Everett resumed eating his breakfast.

"Anybody want to know what I got up early for?" Prudence asked.

"You?" Butch said. "You're the only one who doesn't do anything. All you ever do is stand around and watch."

Prudence nodded. "That's it," she said.

"What's it?" Nanny asked.

"Watch," Prudence replied. "I did it last summer and I think I'll probably do it again this summer."

"Watch?"

Again, Prudence nodded. "When Butch is doing something, I watch him," she said. "Or when Hal or Daddy are doing something, I watch them."

"Now," Nanny said, "maybe we can find out exactly what goes on around here during summer vacation. That is, if we can get our resident watcher to do a little talking." To Prudence, she said, "What is it they do when they do what they do while you're watching?"

Prudence thought for a moment, then shrugged. "Nothing much," she replied. "I watch, anyway, though. I always think they might do *something* someday."

"You call frying on the sidewalk nothing?" Butch said belligerently.

"Don't knock it if you haven't tried it," Hal said to Prudence.

"Besides," Butch went on, still addressing his sister, "if it's nothing, you know what that makes you, don't you? That makes you a nothing-watcher."

"Easy-does-it," the Professor said, sensing a rise in the hostility factor.

Nanny left the table and went to the stove and picked up the tea kettle. "I'm sorry I brought the matter up, now I've found that it's worse than I thought," she said.

The Everetts looked at each other.

"*What* is worse than you thought?" Professor Everett asked.

Nanny, about to turn on the faucet to run water into the kettle, paused and looked toward the table. "Before, I thought you hustled to get out of bed in the morning so you wouldn't be late starting your resting and relaxing," she replied. "Now, however, I find that what you all actually do is nothing. Or, in other words . . ."

". . . we hustle to get out of bed in the morning to do nothing," the Professor said, completing the statement for her.

"Nicely put," Nanny smiled.

"You're wrong," the Professor said.

"Perhaps," Nanny replied. She faced the sink again and turned on the faucet. "But . . ." She interrupted herself. "Oh . . . peanut skins!" she said, annoyed.

Professor Everett and the children laughed.

"Those British expressions!" the Professor said, chuckling. "Peanut skins . . . what does it mean?"

Nanny looked back over her shoulder at him. "It means that when I turned on the tap I got peanut skins," she answered. "And there's nothing particularly British about it. It's . . ." Water suddenly spurted from the faucet. Nanny quickly turned to the sink again to fill the kettle. "It's American pollution," she went on. "Britain *is* pushing exporting these days, but these peanut skins just don't have that shipped-in look."

Professor Everett and the children got up and walked to the sink. They peered at the residue of reddish-brown peanut skins that had settled around the rim of the drain opening.

"That's actually what it is," the Professor said, astounded.

"Where did the peanuts go after they got undressed?" Prudence asked.

"The peanuts," Nanny answered, putting the kettle on the stove, "are still at the Choc—O—Nut Candy Company. I assume. By now, they are probably huddling naked inside a sweet."

Professor Everett looked at the peanut skins in the sink again. "How did you deduce that?" he asked. "I don't see any Choc-O-Nut labels on those skins."

"I have my ways," Nanny replied, smiling mysteriously.

Hal, on his way back to the table, said, "One of those peanut skins slipped her a note before it went

down the drain. That's how she finds out all the things she finds out. Notes." He sat down at his place at the table and picked up his spoon. "Birds send her notes," he went on, "door knobs send her notes," he dipped the spoon into his cereal, "cereal sends her notes . . ." He stopped the progress of the spoon when it was within a few inches of his mouth and stared at it, flabbergasted. He had spooned up a folded piece of paper.

"That's the coupon," Professor Everett said. "Don't look so stunned. Haven't you ever found a coupon in your cereal before?" He turned his attention to Nanny. "But Hal is right," he said. "You seem to know a lot of things that, logically, you couldn't possibly know. How do you do it?"

Nanny fluttered a hand, trying to dismiss the matter. "I told you. I have my ways."

"No, this time I'm going to pin you down," Professor Everett said. "Tell me. How could you possibly know that that peanut skin came from a certain company?"

Nanny faced him. "Well . . ." she said.

"Come on, come on," the Professor urged.

Nanny glanced toward the children. They were peering at her expectantly.

"I confess," Nanny said. "I read it in the newspaper."

Professor Everett frowned, irritated. "Isn't that a little far-fetched? What was it? A headline, 'Peanut Skins Set Sail for Everett House After Launching from Choc-O-Nut Company Kitchen'!"

Nanny walked to the table and picked up the morning paper and opened it to the second page and handed it to the Professor, then returned to the stove.

Professor Everett read the story she had pointed out to him. He smiled, a touch sheepishly, then explained to the children. "There's a story here," he

said. "It seems that the Choc-O-Nut Company has been polluting the water with wastes, some of which are peanut skins, and, somehow, some of the peanut skins got into the drinking water and . . ." He put the paper aside. "Anyway, that more or less explains how Nanny knew where the peanut skins came from." He sat down at his place again.

Hal picked up the paper and began reading the story, seemingly unconvinced that it had been the source of Nanny's inside information on peanut skins.

"You know," Professor Everett said, addressing the children again, "getting back to the subject of vacations and what we do with our time, there's a lot of truth to Nanny's observation."

"What was it I observed?" she asked, approaching the table with a cup of hot tea.

"That we waste the whole summer," he replied.

Nanny looked surprised. "Did I say that?"

"That's what you meant," Professor Everett told her. "And, in a way, I agree. Oh, we *do* things. We do all sorts of things. We go to the beach, some of us read, some of us take trips, and so forth. But, in the end, what have we accomplished?"

"Swimming and reading and travel," Butch answered.

"Those things, yes," the Professor agreed. "But what have we accomplished that is lasting and worthwhile?"

"Boy, you're right," Butch said. "That stuff's not even worth the trouble. Let's stick to frying on the sidewalk."

"I have the feeling that you're missing the point of what I'm saying," Professor Everett told him.

"But you're not saying, you're asking," Nanny protested.

"I want them to learn to think for themselves,"

Professor Everett explained. "Of course, it would be easier to tell them. But if I keep asking, they'll be able to figure it out for themselves." He spoke to the children once more. "What I'm getting at is," he said, "most of what we do during the summer, in the end, amounts to absolutely nothing."

Nanny looked at him indignantly. "How can you possibly say that about frying on the sidewalk—that, in the end, it amounts to nothing?"

"Yeah," Butch said.

"Whose side are you on?" the Professor asked Nanny. "You're the one who accused us of wasting our summers. Now that I'm agreeing with you, though, you seem to have changed your mind."

"But I *didn't* say you were wasting your summers," she replied. "What I said was that, in essence, it seemed a bit silly to scramble out of bed at the crack of dawn to begin resting. After all, it's not the sort of thing you can be late for, when you're right there in bed to begin with, is it?"

"Perhaps that *is* what you said," Professor Everett admitted. "It was perfectly clear to me, however, what it was that you actually meant by what you said, and *that* was something entirely different." He raised a hand to stop another protest from Nanny. "Not that I deny it," he said. "You're right. We *do* waste our summers. We *should* put the time to better use. When the summer ends, we ought to be able to feel that, as a result of something we did, the world is a better place in which to live." He looked around the table at the faces of the children. They were staring at him vacantly. "That may sound a little . . . well, a little . . ."

"Stu—"

"Don't say it!" Professor Everett broke in, inter-

rupting Prudence in mid-word. "The word I had in mind was 'pompous.' But, in spite of that, don't you all agree? Don't you think that would be a nice feeling to have at the end of the summer? Wouldn't it be gratifying to be able to say—truthfully—that you had done something really worthwhile?"

"Would it take the *whole* summer?" Butch asked.

"That would depend on what you decided to do," his father answered.

"Well, could I still be in the family if I decided to do something short?" Butch asked.

Professor Everett laughed. "Yes," he replied. "In fact, you don't *have* to do anything at all. I'm not ordering you to do something. I'm simply suggesting that you might find the summer more enjoyable if you did."

"Really?" Prudence said. "I thought if it was fun it wasn't really a good deed."

"I might try it, I guess," Butch said, "if I can think of something short. I wouldn't want to get tied up in something that I couldn't get out of. You know how that can be."

"Moderation in all things, that's very wise," his father replied, smiling.

"I've got a great thing to do," Hal said. He handed the newspaper toward the Professor. "Did you see this story about the picketing at the candy company? I think I'll go down there and carry a sign."

"We've got that sign from last summer that you can use," Butch told him. "I think it's in the basement somewhere."

Hal looked at him puzzedly. "What sign? What does it say?"

" 'Lemonade 5¢'," Butch replied.

Hal looked disgusted.

"It's a sign, isn't it?" Butch said defensively.

"I need a sign that says 'Down With Something'," Hal explained. "This is a protest."

"Oh, yeah, I've seen that show on television," Butch said. "Boy, you'll need a stronger sign than that one we have in the basement, too. You'll have to hit people with it."

"Is that what they have on television for children these days?" Professor Everett said, raising his eyes from the newspaper, looking incensed. "What program is that, anyway?"

"That's the name of it, 'protest,' " Butch replied. "I see it every night on the news."

"Oh," his father responded, his indignation subsiding. Then he turned to Hal. "This looks like a safe enough protest," he said. "And anti-pollution is a good cause. But, even so, I don't think you ought to participate. You're still a little young for that sort of thing." He smiled. "Anyway, you couldn't qualify. You're not a stockholder in the company."

"What's that?" Nanny asked.

Professor Everett indicated the story in the newspaper. "There's going to be a protest at that candy company," he said, "because of the peanut skins in the drinking water. But—here's a switch—the protesters will be Choc-O-Nut stockholders."

Nanny looked dubious.

"I mean it," Professor Everett said. He consulted the newspaper story again, then said, "A man named Ferenci Vanalps, who says he's a professional protester, has organized it. He appealed to the sense of morality, he says, of the real owners of the company, the stockholders, and a great many of them have, as he tells it, 'flocked to the colors.' They'll be picketing the company headquarters today."

Nanny reached out a hand.

Professor Everett gave her the newspaper.

Nanny read the story of the high-minded stockholders, then put down the paper and said, "Well, I've found my blow to strike—a-picketing I go. I'm not a stockholder in Choc-O-Nut Candy Company but, considering what I got out of the tap this morning, I'm certainly qualified to protest."

Professor Everett applauded. "Good, good," he said. "I'd join you, I think, except that I can strike a more effective blow at pollution by staying right here."

Nanny nodded. "That's what the General always says to the troops, 'I'd join you at the front, men, except that if I went along, there'd be nobody here to send you to the front.' "

Professor Everett laughed. "I have a somewhat better reason than that," he said. "I've been playing around with a formula for a chemical which, if it works, may help us cut down on pollution. Various kinds of pollution, at least."

"What kinds?" Nanny asked.

"Smoke, for example," the Professor replied. "The idea would be to direct the smoke through the chemical. While it was passing through, the impurities would be broken down."

"Would that help?" Butch asked doubtfully. "Who wants the air full of a lot of broken down impurities? Wouldn't smoke be better?"

"What I mean is, the nature of the impurities would be changed," his father replied. "You see, the properties . . ." He interrupted himself and looked thoughtful for a second, then continued. "Perhaps it will be easier to understand," he said, "if, first, I tell you a little bit about smoke. Smoke, essentially, is the mixture of gases and suspended carbon particles that results from the combustion of . . . ah . . ." He saw

that his explanation was confusing rather than enlightening the children.

"Your father wants to mix up some sort of a liquid that will wash all the icky out of the smoke," Nanny said.

The children's faces brightened.

"Well, technically, yes," Professor Everett nodded. "And, while Nanny is picketing, I'll be in my office working on the formula. Although, to be absolutely accurate, the formula is complete. I'll put together a sample of the solution and test it."

"That easily?" Nanny said, surprised.

"That's the beauty of it, it's so simple and so inexpensive to make," Professor Everett replied. "The only major drawback is that it's sensitive."

"We'll all try very hard not to say anything that would hurt its feelings," Nanny promised.

"What I mean is," the Professor said, "I'm afraid that its properties won't hold the mix well." He saw the vacant expressions on the faces of the children. "Don't expect me to try to explain that," he said. "When the time comes, I'll show you what I mean."

"We do that at school sometimes," Butch said.

"Do what?"

"Have 'show and tell.' "

"This is not quite the same," Professor Everett said. "This is . . ." He shrugged. "Come to think of it, I guess it *is* the same."

"If Nanny is going to the protest," Hal said to his father, "may I go, too?"

Professor Everett shook his head. "You haven't aged enough in the last five minutes," he said. "As I said before, it sounds safe. But people who are protesting can get worked up. Anything might happen. I wouldn't want to have to bail you out of jail."

"What'll I do, then, to make the world a better place to live in?" Hal asked.

"Clean up your room," Nanny suggested.

"That would make the world a worse place to live in," Hal said. "I wouldn't be comfortable in my room if it was cleaned-up."

"I'll accept that," Nanny nodded.

"Hal, only you can decide what's best for you to do," Professor Everett said. "Ask yourself what it is that really bugs you. Then find out what you can do about it and do it."

Hal looked thoughtful, then said, "You know what really bugs me? It's people who complain about other people not obeying the laws but who don't obey the laws themselves."

"Yes," the Professor nodded, "that's . . ."

"I really get steamed up about that sometimes," Hal said, glowering. "Do you know who I mean? I mean the people who say that people ought to be put in jail when they break the law, only they're talking about the laws that other people break, not the laws that they break themselves." He glared angrily. "You know what people like that ought to have happen to them? They ought to get what they say they want. I mean somebody ought to put them in jail for not obeying the laws *they* don't obey."

"Yeah!" Butch said excitedly. "Boy, that bugs me, too!"

Professor Everett pointed to Hal and addressed Butch. "Do you really know what he was talking about?" he asked.

"Why do I have to know what he's talking about?" Butch asked. "He knows, doesn't he?"

The Professor spoke to Hal again. "That is what I mean when I say that anything can happen when peo-

ple get worked up," he said. "You had Butch so excited, he would have followed you anywhere—right into battle, if that's where you'd been going—and he wouldn't have known why. So, control your emotions."

"Does that mean I can't do anything about that, either?" Hal said. "You're sure making it hard for me to make the world a better place to live in."

"Don't misunderstand me," the Professor said. "I'm not telling you not to do anything about . . . about . . . that is, about that thing that bugs you. I . . ."

"You mean you didn't know what he was talking about, either?" Butch asked his father.

"I *know* what he was talking about," Professor Everett replied. "It's just that it's not easy to put a thing like that into words. But, nevertheless, both Hal and I know what he was talking about."

"He was talking about people who want some people to obey some laws, while they themselves aren't obeying other laws," Nanny said to Butch.

He smiled. "Oh!" Then he scowled. "I was right all along, and just didn't know it. That bugs me, too," he said. He turned to Hal. "When are we going into battle?" he asked.

"I hope there won't be any battle," the Professor said. "If Hal maintains control over his emotions, there shouldn't be." He spoke to Hal. "What do you intend to do about the situation?" he asked.

Hal shrugged. "I don't know. I'll probably play it by ear."

"Just remember, stay calm," his father advised.

"And don't break any laws," Nanny said. "It would prove rather embarrassing, wouldn't it, if you happened to break a law while doing something about the people who want others to obey laws, while they themselves are disobeying other laws?" She rose.

"Well, if you'll excuse me," she said, "I'm off to the picket line." She left the kitchen.

"I better get to work on that experiment," Professor Everett said, getting up. "If anybody wants me," he said, leaving, "I'll be in my office."

"I'm going to the library," Hal said to Butch and Prudence, rising. "Anybody want to go with me?"

"Not if there's not going to be any battle," Butch told him.

"I think I'll stay here and watch Butch," Prudence said.

When Hal had gone, Butch and Prudence remained sitting at the table in silence for a while. Then Butch sighed.

"They could have made the world a better place to live in if they'd stayed here and put the breakfast dishes in the dishwasher instead of leaving it for us to do," he said.

"We ought to do some good deeds ourselves, if that's what you have to do to get out of the work," Prudence said.

Butch considered for a second, then picked up the newspaper. "Nanny found a good deed to do in here," he said. "Maybe we can find one for us, too."

Prudence moved over a chair, so that she could watch him more closely while he scanned the newspaper for a good deed to do. "The whole world would probably get to be a better place to live in pretty fast if everybody could do a good deed instead of loading the dishwasher," she said.

CHAPTER TWO

When she arrived at the Choc-O-Nut Candy Company, Nanny found that the factory was surrounded by a high brick wall. She approached the entrance gate and was halted by a guard, who, for public relations purposes, no doubt, was dressed to resemble a candy bar.

"May I see your stock certificates, Miss?" the guard said cordially.

Nanny blinked at him. "I don't believe I have any," she replied. "Is it necessary? I'm here to protest."

The guard looked apologetic. "Sorry, Miss, but this protest is by invitation only," he told her. He motioned toward the picketers inside the wall, who were marching up and down in front of the entrance to the factory building. "Them crazy radicals in there is stockholders, each and every one," he said. "Except

the fellow in charge, that is. He's an outsider. But, I guess you got to have somebody that knows the ropes when you're protesting for the first time."

"This seems very unfair to me," Nanny said, annoyed. "I turned on my tap this morning and got peanut skins. I feel I have a right to protest."

The guard thought for a moment. "Maybe you could go around back to the employees' entrance and do your protesting there," he suggested. "But this entrance is reserved for stockholders." He scowled. "Try to understand, Miss. These radicals that are protesting today are good people." He pointed. "Look at them. They're clean and neat and they're not doing a lot of shouting and disturbing of the peace. But they'd be nervous, I'm afraid, with a stranger in there with them. Ever see one of them old western movies where the slightest little sound started off a stampede? The same could happen right here if I let an outside radical get in there with our good radicals. You could start a stampede." He shook his head. "Sorry, Miss."

Nanny, oddly, responded with an expression of delight. "Would you do that again, please," she said.

"Do what, Miss?"

"Shake your head. When you shake, your bulges wobble."

The guard scowled again. "Them's not bulges, Miss," he said. "Them's my nuts and raisins. I'm a candy bar."

"Yes, I understand. And it's fascinating. If you could just . . ."

Catching sight of a young man who was approaching from the direction of the picketers, Nanny interrupted herself and turned toward him. He was tall and thin and moderately good-looking. His hair was long, down to his shoulders, and he was wearing bell-bottoms, a black velvet T-shirt, a leather vest,

and was barefoot. The young man was studying Nanny and was clearly pleased by what he saw.

"Trouble here?" the young man asked. He had a pleasant manner.

The guard shuddered. "This is the one I told you about—the outsider," he said to Nanny. Then, to the young man, he said, "No trouble, sir. I'm just keeping things orderly."

"I got peanut skins from my tap this morning and I'm here to protest and he won't let me in," Nanny said to the young man.

"You're not a stockholder, I take it," the young man said.

Nanny shook her head.

"A customer?"

"Not exactly," Nanny replied. "I do have some of the company's garbage in my sink, however. Peanut skins."

"That ought to qualify you," the young man said. He faced the guard. "Miss . . . uh . . ." he began. Then he turned back to Nanny. "It is 'Miss,' isn't it?"

She nodded, smiling. "Miss Figalilly."

Again, the young man addressed the guard. "Miss Piccalilli is a very dear, very close personal friend of mine," he said. "She has traveled a great, great distance to be with me in my time of triumph. So, in her case, I think, an exception can be made." He motioned to Nanny. "You may enter and join us," he said.

"It's against the rules!" the guard said, trembling with suppressed rage.

"You're wobbling again," Nanny told him. "If I were you, I'd get those raisins on my left shoulder sewed on a bit more tightly. You're going to lose them."

"I don't need no advice from no radical on how to wear my raisins!" the guard snapped.

"Fascist candy bar," the young man sneered. Then he put a hand on Nanny's arm and steered her toward the picket line, leaving the guard fuming.

"Are you, by any chance, the young man, the professional protester, who was mentioned in the newspaper story?" Nanny asked.

The young man nodded. "That's me, Ferenci Vanalps," he replied.

"I think it's a stroke of genius, getting the stockholders to protest," Nanny said. "After all, who has more influence with the management of a company than the stockholders, the people who actually own the company. I'm surprised, though," she said, indicating the two-dozen or more people in the picket line, "that you found so many who were willing to cooperate. How did you do it?"

"You said it yourself: genius," Ferenci replied.

"But, uh . . ."

They had reached a stack of picket signs. Ferenci got one for Nanny. It said, *Pollution Is a Dirty Word!* Then, after handing her the sign, he escorted her to the picket line. He walked beside her as she marched back and forth carrying the sign.

"I realize that it was genius," Nanny said. "But how exactly did you do it? What did you say to them? How did you appeal to them?"

"The idea came to me as sort of an inspiration," Ferenci replied. "I was sitting around the pad one day, thinking about dirty capitalist dogs, when it occurred to me that perhaps they all weren't as bad as they seemed. I thought maybe they don't realize that they're dirty capitalist dogs. Maybe nobody has ever told them. I asked myself if it wasn't possible that inside every dirty capitalist dog there was a good-hearted, sweet-souled radical humanist aching to get out."

"Yes?"

"So, I looked a few of them up in the yellow pages and gave them a call. I appealed to their innate sense of morality. I said, 'the company you own is poisoning the air, poisoning the water, poisoning the soil. What are you going to do about it?' "

Nanny smiled happily. "And here they are, protesting, showing that, down deep, they are really fine, moral, decent people."

"Well, actually, this is only a small portion of the ones I called," Ferenci replied. "The majority of them got together and formed a new company to market poisoned air, water and soil. They sell it to the farmers who are paid by the Government not to grow crops. It works, I understand." He looked sad. "I wish I had some stock in *that* company," he said. "It went on the market at ten dollars and it's up to seventy now."

Nanny looked at him sideways. "You're kidding, aren't you?"

"I might as well be," Ferenci replied. "I lost the chance to get in on the ground floor. And it seems unfair, too. In a sense, you might say that I founded that poisoned air, water and soil company. If I hadn't told those guys what was happening, they wouldn't have . . ." He interrupted himself, then pointed toward the entrance to the factory. "That's Oscar McCartle, the president of the company," he said. "I wonder what he wants."

Nanny looked in the direction that Ferenci was pointing. A plump, middle-aged, white-haired man had appeared. He was accompanied by a slightly younger man who was carrying a wooden box. As Nanny watched she saw the younger man place the box on the ground. Then, however, her view was ob-

scured, as the picketers crowded toward the front of the factory building.

"I suppose we might as well listen to what he has to say, although it will be a pack of lies," Ferenci said to Nanny. "Let's join the sheep."

When they got near the entrance to the building, they saw that the older man had mounted the wooden box. His assistant was standing by, ready to catch him if he should fall off.

"Fellow stockholders!" the president of the company said.

A cheer rose from the picketers.

Ferenci looked slightly worried. "He sounds like a man who's willing to listen to reason," he said. "That's the dirtiest dirty capitalist trick of all."

The president, Oscar McCartle, continued. "I have consulted the company records, checked your identities, your fingerprints and your stock holdings," he said, "and I have discovered that, combined, you own enough stock to vote me out of the office of president."

"That explains it," Ferenci said glumly. "No wonder he's willing to listen to reason."

"Consequently," McCartle went on, "I have no choice but to give in to your demands!"

Again a cheer rose from the picketers.

"You've won!" Nanny said to Ferenci.

"Big deal," he said morosely. "Now I have to go start a protest somewhere else. That's the big drawback to this job—traveling."

"Shhh . . . listen . . ." Nanny said, as the president of the company began to speak again.

"I am ready to take the necessary steps to end the pollution caused by your company," McCartle announced to the stockholders. "However, there are

some facts that I think ought to be brought to your attention. Fact No. 1, the cost of ending the pollution will be, approximately, ten million dollars."

A groan rose from the picketers.

Ferenci Vanalps shouted out in response. "Clean air and clean water are worth any price!" he said.

The picketers reacted again with a loud cheer.

"Fact No. 2," Oscar McCartle continued, "that ten million dollar cost will come out of profits. That means, of course, that we will not be able to pay a dividend. And, naturally, the value of your stock will undoubtedly drop right through the floor."

A moan rose from the picketers.

"Clean air and clean water are worth any price!" Ferenci Vanalps shouted again.

"Oh, dry up, you long-haired radical agitator!" one of the picketers said.

"So, I say to you," McCartle said, raising his voice, "do you want dividends or do you want pie in the sky?"

"How did pie in the sky get into it?" Nanny asked Ferenci.

His reply, however, was drowned out by the shouts of the picketers, who were cheering vigorously for dividends.

"I hear your command!" McCartle shouted back. "You have ordered me to ignore all efforts to sway company policy by mob rule and I will obey!"

"But what about the morality of it!" Ferenci bellowed.

"I guess I'm just an old-fashioned fuddy-duddy," the president replied, looking humble, "but I've always believed that morality begins in the home. So," he said, pointing toward the exit, "I say to you: go home!"

A cheer rose from the ex-picketers. In a body, they

turned and, breaking into spirited song, marched toward the gate. A few moments later they disappeared from sight. And when Nanny and Ferenci Vanalps faced the factory again they found that Oscar McCartle and his assistant had gone back inside. They were alone.

Ferenci Vanalps shrugged. "Oh, well, that's the way the protest bounces," he said. "You lose one cause one way and another cause another way. But, it all evens out in the end—zero."

"Well, we can't let it stand at that," Nanny said crossly. "The factory is still polluting the water. Something has to be done about it and that's that! Now," she said to Ferenci, "what's the next step?"

"Violence," he replied.

Nanny shook her head. "No, no, we haven't reached that point yet."

"Who's the expert?" Ferenci asked crankily. "You or me? I've been doing this since I was a freshman in college. I think I know a little more about it than you do." He raised a finger. "The first step," he said, "is reasonably peaceful picketing. That, we've found, doesn't work in this case." He raised a second finger. "The second step," he said, "is to blow something up. In this instance, it would be appropriate, I think, to blow up the candy factory." He frowned thoughtfully. "We'll need some explosives. How's your credit? All my credit cards have been cancelled. The problem is, you see, when I buy dynamite on credit and then find that I can't pay for it, the credit card outfit is sort of stuck. It's practically impossible to repossess used dynamite."

"I imagine," Nanny nodded. "However, we'll have no need for dynamite. Not yet, at least." She headed toward the entrance to the factory. "Since your first way failed," she said, as Ferenci Vanalps tagged along

after her, "I get to try my first way before you're allowed to move to your second way."

"What's *your* first way?" Ferenci asked. "Are you carrying a gun? You don't *look* armed. Except for the way you use your eyes, that is. But if you think you can charm a hard-headed businessman like McCartle, forget it."

"My first way," Nanny answered, entering the building, "is a face-to-face confrontation with the adversary, during which we will both express our views in a very calm and collected manner. This will shortly be followed by a solution to the problem, which will be reached by mutual agreement."

Ferenci Vanalps snickered. "I'm going along," he said, "but only for the laughs."

Leading the way, Nanny strode down a long central corridor until she reached a door on which the name of the president of the company was printed. She opened the door, and, with Ferenci still at her heels, entered an outer office. A receptionist who was seated at a desk in the office looked up and smiled.

"I would like to see Mr. McCartle," Nanny announced pleasantly. "I have a number of things, particularly pollution, that I would like to discuss with him."

The receptionist's smile faded. "Mr. McCartle refuses to discuss pollution," she replied. "He read somewhere that it's a dirty word."

"One of the other things I'd like to discuss with him," Nanny went on, "is some information I have on a plot to blow up his factory."

The receptionist swallowed hard, then punched a button on the intercom, intending to contact the president of the company. At that instant, however, the door to the inner office opened and Oscar McCartle put his head out.

"Nevermind!" he said to the receptionist. "I was listening at the keyhole." He motioned to Nanny. "Come in, come in," he urged, opening the door wider.

Smiling victoriously, Nanny strode past him, entering his private office. Ferenci slipped in behind her, very nearly getting caught when Oscar McCartle closed the door.

"Have a seat, please," McCartle said to Nanny, as he settled behind a huge desk. "Now," he said worriedly, "as I understand it, you have some inside information about a bomb plot."

"Quite," Nanny answered. She had seated herself in the chair that faced the desk and now she leaned slightly forward and, lowering her voice said, "My information is that if you've heard anything about a bomb plot you'd be wise to disregard it."

McCartle looked perplexed. "Pardon?"

"There is no plot. No bomb plot," Nanny told him. "So, you can stop worrying and relax and we can discuss pollution."

The president's expression became grim. "That's not the kind of language for a lady," he told her. "Perhaps you've led a sheltered life and don't realize it, but pollution happens to be a d---y w--d."

"Very well, we'll call it something else, then," Nanny said. "But whether it's called 'buttercups' or 'roselips' or 'honeydew,' it's still pollution and I refuse to leave here until you and I have discussed it and have reached a mutual agreement about what to do about it." She smiled sweetly. "There, now, what could be simpler or fairer?"

Ferenci chuckled.

"Miss . . . uh . . ." McCartle began.

"Figalilly," Nanny said, "but you can call me 'Nanny,' everybody does."

"All right, Miss Nanny. Now . . ."

"Good!" Nanny said. "I knew you'd want to be fair. And, in appreciation, I'm going to be as brief as possible." She settled back in her chair, getting comfortable. "It began, as far as it affects me personally, this morning," she said, "when I turned on the tap and got peanut skins in the place of water. Well, let's face it, Mr. McCartle, one simply cannot prepare a proper cup of tea from peanut skins, can one?"

"No, I suppose not. How . . ."

"You're absolutely correct," Nanny said. "There is much more involved here than one nanny's proper pot of tea. Oh, I couldn't agree with you more. There's all that gunk, to quote a young friend of mine, that floats up on the beaches and makes walking across the sand somewhat like a stroll through the morning porridge, yesterday morning's porridge, I might add. And then there's the plight of the poor little fish. Imagine how you'd feel yourself, Mr. McCartle, if you were a fish and you opened your mouth to take a swallow of the river and you got peanut skins instead."

"Miss Nanny, I don't happen . . ."

"Or the sky," Nanny broke in.

"Ahhhh . . . the, uh, sky?"

"That smoke," she replied. "That smoke that your factory chimneys pour into the sky."

"It's our sky," McCartle replied. "Any sky that is located directly above our factory is *our* sky. If our smoke gets over into your sky, well, I'm sorry. But, if the truth were known, your sky probably lured it over there."

"I won't debate that with you," Nanny replied. "It's not really important, since my employer, a scientist, plans to have the problem of smoke pollution solved very shortly. I am mainly concerned about the pollution, otherwise referred to as peanut skins, that

you are pumping into the water. You simply must stop it." She smiled sweetly again. "There, now. I've had my say. It's your turn. Then, after that, we'll work out a solution that is acceptable to both of us."

Oscar McCartle looked at Ferenci Vanalps.

Ferenci Vanalps snickered.

The president of the company faced Nanny again. "I can give you my say in one word," he told her. "The word is 'No.'" He gestured irritably. "Now, please leave."

Nanny sighed, discouraged but not defeated. "Mr. McCartle," she said, "you obviously don't understand the process. It's necessary for you to tell me why you can't stop the pollution before I can tell you why you're obviously wrong and *must* stop it."

"If I tell you, will you leave?" McCartle asked wearily.

"I'll leave when we reach a mutually-agreed-upon solution. But, first things first. First, give me your wholly unacceptable reasons."

Oscar McCartle was silent for a moment. During that time he apparently reached the conclusion that the only way to get rid of Nanny was to humor her. For when he spoke, he said, "My first reason, as I just explained to a group of rebellious stockholders, is money. It would cost in the neighborhood . . ."

"Yes, yes, I heard that," Nanny interrupted, "but it's not a reason at all. It's simply an evasion. I'm not asking you to *do* something, you see. I'm asking you *not* to do something—that is, not to throw your old peanut skins into the water. How could not doing something possibly cost you money?"

"She's got you there, you dirty capitalist dog," Ferenci said to McCartle. "Get out of that one!"

McCartle glared at him, then faced Nanny again. "Let me explain," he said. "You see, Miss Nanny, in

manufacturing candy bars we use millions of peanuts every day. Each peanut has a skin. Consequently, we find ourselves with millions of peanut skins on our hands each day."

Ferenci shuddered.

McCartle looked at him again. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"All those peanut skins on your hands," Ferenci replied. "They're so hard to get off. They cling."

"When I said 'on our hands,' I didn't mean . . ." Looking disgusted, he faced Nanny again. "Something has to be done with all those millions of peanut skins," he said. "So, we dump them into what we call the peanut skin disintegrator machine, and it disintegrates them out through a long pipe and into the river."

"Disintegrates them?" Nanny said.

"Well, actually, it just pumps them through the pipe and blows them out into the river," McCartle replied. "I used the word 'disintegrate' because the machine happens to be called the peanut skin disintegrator machine. It used to be called the peanut skin pumping machine but our public relations department told us that it was bad public relations to be pumping peanut skins into the river, so we changed the name of the machine."

Nanny nodded. "I certainly see your problem," she said. "Millions of peanut skins is a lot of peanut skins. However, that doesn't alter the fact that the pollution must stop. So, have you decided yet what you're going to do about the peanut skins?"

"You kids!" McCartle said indignantly. "You always know what's wrong but you never come up with any solutions!"

"You want *me* to tell you what to do with the peanut skins?" Nanny said, surprised. "I assumed you might look upon that as interference. But, since

you've asked for my help, yes, of course, I'll be glad to tell you what to do with your peanut skins. You can . . ."

McCartle has stuffed his fingers into his ears.

"*It's all right!*" Ferenci shouted. "*She's a dear, dear friend and, take my word for it, p-------n is the only d---y w--d she knows!*"

McCartle removed his fingers from his ears.

" . . . put them in bags," Nanny concluded.

McCartle stared at her. "Put them in bags? Millions of peanut skins? But then . . . what shall we do with the bags?"

"Oh, tuck them away," Nanny replied, gesturing airily. "There's always a nook or a cranny to be found to be used to tuck away something extra. I have little things tucked away in nooks and crannies here and there all over the globe. Surely, in this big factory, you can find a few places to tuck away a bag or two of peanut skins." She smiled once more. "Solve your problem for you?"

"We would very soon have to build another factory this size just to store the bags of peanut skins," McCartle said.

"Very well, if you want to do it that way," Nanny replied. "I just thought that using up the nooks and crannies would be less expensive."

"You have not helped," McCartle told her. "We cannot store the peanut skins. We must get rid of them. And pumping them into the river is the best possible way of doing it."

"But it pollutes! How can you possibly say that's the best possible way?"

"It gets them off our hands," McCartle replied. He leaned forward, looking grim again. "Young lady, have you ever asked yourself why the Good Lord made rivers? Give it a little thought and the answer is

obvious. To carry away the peanut skins, that's why. Don't ask me to go against the ways of the Lord. I'm a very religious man." He glanced at his watch. "Well, you had your chance, and you wasted a good deal of my valuable time, so . . ."

"Mr. McCartle . . ." Nanny said softly.

"Yes . . . ?" McCartle replied, looking at her warily.

"I want to appeal to you as a citizen of the community," Nanny said. "Don't think of that river as 'the river.' Think of it as 'your river.' Are you married, Mr. McCartle?"

"Yes, of course. To Mrs. McCartle."

"And do you have children?"

"Yes, Jimmy and Tommy, the McCartle boys and little Kim Victoria, the McCartle girl."

"Your wife, Mr. McCartle, and your children, Mr. McCartle, do they drink water?"

"By the gallon," McCartle replied.

"Then think, Mr. McCartle," Nanny said, continuing to speak softly. "Think what you're doing to your wife, to your children. . . . Where does that water come from that they drink by the gallon, Mr. McCartle?"

"Why, from the private well that I have in my back yard," McCartle replied.

"Oh," Nanny said, speaking in a normal tone again.

"I don't even live in this community," McCartle told her. "I live on a mountain in a suburb, with a private swimming pool and a private supply of drinking water. Why, I'd be a fool to live in this area. The water, the soil, the air, all polluted, you know."

Ferenci Vanalps addressed Nanny. "Are you willing to admit now that my solution is the best?" he said.

"No."

"What's his solution?" McCartle asked Nanny.

"The wrong solution," she replied.

"Don't believe it," Vanalps said to McCartle. "It's the complete solution. It's dynamite."

"I'd like to hear it," McCartle said.

"This suburb where you live, how far away is it?" Ferenci Vanalps asked.

"Oh, thirty miles."

"Then you'll hear it," Ferenci told him. "You'll feel it, too. It'll rattle your swimming pool."

McCartle glared at him. "When you said 'dynamite,' did you mean . . ." He pointed toward the door. "Out of here, both of you!" he commanded.

"But we haven't solved the problem," Nanny protested.

"Miss Nanny," McCartle said sharply, "my problem is peanut skins. I solved it long ago by pumping them into the river. Now, they're no longer my problem."

Nanny looked at him steadily for a moment. Then she said, "I think that may soon change, Mr. McCartle."

"Out!" he roared.

Nanny sat.

"Out! Or I'll called the police!" McCartle bellowed.

Ferenci rose and pulled at Nanny's sleeve. "We better go," he said.

"One more second," she replied. "I'm waiting for a phone call."

Ferenci and McCartle looked at each other.

The phone on McCartle's desk jangled. His eyes opened wide in surprise. Then he picked up the receiver and identified himself. A moment later he began a frantic conversation.

"What do you mean, the disintegration machine is

pumping backwards?" he said. "Do something! It's . . . What? The whole section is filling up with peanut skins? Switch off the machine!"

"Is *that* the phone call you were expecting?" Ferenci said to Nanny.

"Yes."

"How did you know that . . ."

"Didn't you hear all that running outside?" she replied. "Shouting, too. I guessed that something had happened and I wanted to find out what it was. I assumed, of course, that if it was important someone would telephone the president of the company. Isn't that natural?"

"Natural," Ferenci nodded. He did not sound satisfied, however.

"What do you mean, you can't turn it off!" McCartle shouted into the phone. "All machines can be turned off! You just . . . What? The whole floor is filled with peanut skins and you can't even get near the machine? Oh . . . well, that's different. Look," he said, near panic, "we've got to do something. This will cost us a fortune. We've got to figure out some other way of getting rid of peanut skins." He slumped in his seat. "For the time being," he said into the phone, "I want you, and all the other employees, to start saving the bags you bring your lunch in. I have this plan. You see, we fill the bags with peanut skins and . . ."

Nanny and Ferenci did not stay to hear the rest of the plan. Taking pity on the president of the company in his hour of travail, they tiptoed from his office.

CHAPTER THREE

"That was magnificent!" Ferenci Vanalps told Nanny, as they left the grounds of the Choc-O-Nut Candy Company. "If I had a power like that, I could change the world overnight. How did you do it?"

Nanny halted and looked at him warily. "Do what?" she asked.

"How did you get that machine to pump peanut skins into the factory instead of into the river?" Ferenci replied.

Nanny laughed. "You think *I* did that? That's impossible, if you think about it. I was in Mr. McCartle's office, while the machine was . . . well, wherever the machine was."

"Then how do you explain the fact that it happened just when you said it was going to happen?"

"I said no such thing."

"Maybe you didn't use those exact words," Ferenci admitted. "But you threatened McCartle and then that machine began pumping in instead of out."

"I did *not* threaten Mr. McCartle," Nanny replied. "And if you really want to know why the machine suddenly went berserk, the answer is probably because it's a machine. Machines, you know, occasionally have breakdowns, just like people. And when a machine that is accustomed to pumping out has a breakdown, it more than likely begins pumping in. Wouldn't you say?"

"No," Ferenci replied.

"Well, then, look at it this way," Nanny said. "If I had the sort of power that you think I have, wouldn't I do the same as you just said you'd do? Wouldn't I change the world overnight?"

Ferenci considered for a few seconds, then nodded. "I suppose so," he replied.

"Very well, that settles the matter," Nanny said, smiling. She extended a hand. "It's been very nice meeting you," she said. "But I must be going now."

Ferenci ignored the hand. "Going where?"

"Home, naturally."

"How do you intend to get there?"

"Why, the same way I got here, by bus."

Ferenci beamed. "I'll drive you," he said. He put a hand on her arm and guided her toward an ancient, fragile-looking car that was parked at the curb. "I'm between protests, so I don't have anything better to do, anyway," he said. "Where do you live?"

"Near the University," Nanny replied. "My employer is a professor there. He's the scientist whom I mentioned to Mr. McCartle. Professor Harold Everett perhaps you've heard of him?"

"I never listen when scientists' names are mentioned," Ferenci replied. "Scientists are the villains of

the age." He opened a door of the car and motioned for Nanny to get in. "If they're not developing bigger bombs, they're developing chemicals that poison our food." He bent over and looked in at Nanny, who had settled herself in the seat. "How did a nice girl like you get mixed up with a menace to mankind?" he asked.

"I volunteered and he's not," she answered.

"You're not an assistant scientist, are you?" Ferenci said, shaking his head. "You couldn't be. You just don't have that evil, mad look about the eyes."

Nanny laughed. "No, I'm not an assistant," she replied. "I'm a nanny."

Ferenci stared at her in disbelief for a second. Then he shrugged and straightened up and slammed the door of the car. The hood flew up.

"Your bonnet!" Nanny called.

"I know."

Ferenci walked to the front of the car and slammed down the hood. At the rear, the trunk lid flew up.

Nanny put her head out the window. "Try a little gentleness," she suggested.

Ferenci went to the back of the car and *gently* closed the lid of the trunk. It remained closed, and, amazingly, so did all the doors and the hood. Pleased, he then got into the car and started the engine and drove off, headed in the general direction of the university.

"A nanny, that's a servant, isn't it?" Ferenci said, distaste in his tone.

Nanny glanced at him. "I rather imagine that depends on how one looks at the job," she replied. "You see, there are three small children in the home and no mother. And Professor Everett really couldn't look after them properly. So, I look upon the position, actually, as . . ."

"The same old story," Ferenci broke in. "You're afraid to rebel, to cast off your chains, so you kid yourself into believing that you're a part of the family, that you're needed, that what you're doing is important. Face it, though. What you really are is a combination baby-sitter, janitor and maid. Only this Professor Everett pays you only one salary. So, you know what that makes you? Cheap labor. A slave."

"That's possibly true," Nanny replied.

"Very good—you're able to admit that you're being victimized," Ferenci said approvingly. "That makes taking action easier. I'll drive you to this mad Professor's digs and you can pick up your belongings, then I'll take you . . . well, wherever you decide to go. I have a friend who makes bombs who might be able to put you up for a while. If she's still living in the same place, that is. She moves around a lot from rooming house to rooming house."

"Police persecution, I imagine," Nanny said.

"Well, mostly it's because she's a little careless with explosives. The rooming houses keep disappearing out from under her."

"Thank you very much," Nanny said. "I think, however, that I'll remain a slave, for the time being, at least." She pointed. "Turn left at the next corner," she said. "After that, the house is only a few blocks further on."

"Big house?" Ferenci asked.

"Oh . . . adequate."

"I might stay on for a while," Ferenci said. "When I'm not protesting, I do a little converting. I convert economic royalists and slum landlords and dirty capitalist dogs in general to humanism. I've never converted a scientist. I might work on this Professor Everett for a while until another protest turns up.

How's the food at this place?" he asked, turning the car onto the street that Nanny had pointed out.

"Well, since I do the cooking . . ." She interrupted herself and pointed once more. "Will you stop there at the corner, please?" she said. "There's Hal and he seems to be signaling to that police car."

"Hal who?" Ferenci asked, slowing the car.

"One of Professor Everett's children."

Ferenci looked impressed. "He must be psychic," he said. "All I did was *mention* moving in and already he's whistling up the cops!"

The car halted. Nanny got out and, followed by Ferenci Vanalps, approached the corner where Hal was now in conversation with two police officers. Hal was holding a large book. He had it open and was pointing to a particular place on a page.

"Is there some problem?" Nanny asked.

"Hi," Hal smiled. "No, no problem. I'm just showing them this ordinance. I got this book from the library. It has all the laws in it."

"Is this your kid, lady?" the older of the two policemen asked, looking annoyed.

"I'm his nanny," Nanny replied.

The policeman stared at her blankly.

The younger policeman then took him aside and whispered to him. A moment later, both policemen returned.

"Oh," the older policeman said to Nanny. "Well, in that case, you better tell him that interfering with a policeman while he's in the performance of his duty is an illegal offense."

"I'm not interfering," Hal said. "I'm assisting."

"What exactly happened?" Nanny asked.

"We were driving along, attending to the performance of our duty," the policeman replied, "when this

kid waved to us to stop. And when we got out of our car, he tells us that this vehicle," he pointed to a car that was parked at the curb, "is in violation."

"That's right," Hal told Nanny. He pointed to the page in the book again. "According to ordinance seventy-four-dash-eleven-dash-sixty-six, any car that's more than twelve inches from the curb when parked is in violation." He extended the book toward the older policeman. "Want to read it?"

"I don't need no book to tell me what the ordinances are," the policeman replied gruffly.

"I still don't quite understand what the problem is," Nanny said, addressing the older policeman again. "If the automobile is in violation, then shouldn't you arrest it or whatever it is that's indicated?"

"He's supposed to give it a ticket," Hal informed her.

"How do I know it's more than twelve inches from the curb?" the policeman said. "You think I've got nothing better to do than go around measuring all the cars in town?"

Hal put the book down, got out a retractable tape measure, and measured the distance between the curb and the tire of the car. "Twelve and seven-eighths inches," he reported.

"Listen," the older policeman said, "if you was my kid . . ."

The younger policeman was pulling at his sleeve. Grudgingly, the older policeman moved a few paces away with him. They held a brief, whispered conversation, then they returned. The older policeman was now smiling benignly.

"Well, boys'll be boys," the older policeman said. "And, it's like some people say, I guess, we got to give the young folks today some respect, even if some other people happen to know that what they really

got coming to them is a . . . but, that's neither here nor there, is it?" He looked at the car. "You say it's illegally parked, eh? All right, we'll give it a ticket. And then we'll all go about our business. My partner and me, we'll proceed with the performance of our duty. And you, you little—" he went on, smiling grimly at Hal, ". . . citizen, you, you'll go play in your sandbox, where you belong. Right?"

Hal shook his head. "I've found about a dozen other violations in the neighborhood that I want to point out to you," he said. "There are three other illegally parked cars and four garbage cans with loose lids and one cast-iron weather vane, and . . ."

"Hold it!" the older policeman said. "One what?"

"One cast-iron weather vane," Hal answered. "According to ordinance twenty-six-dash-nineteen-dash-four, even the mere possession of a cast-iron weather vane is against the law. As I understand it, the law was pushed through by the people who manufactured wooden weather vanes. It was passed in the year eighteen-seventy-four."

"You want me to give somebody a summons because he's got a cast-iron weather vane?" the older policeman said, appalled.

"It's the law," Hal replied. "The Alexanders, a block over and a block down, have a cast-iron weather vane on their house. So, I guess you'll have to arrest them. You can't let the Alexanders get away with breaking the law if you're going to arrest the Bradys and the Johnsons and the Pilsudskis, can you?"

"Who're the Bradys and the . . . . all those others?" the policeman asked.

"Loose lids on their garbage cans," Hal explained.

The older policeman turned to Nanny. "Lady, can't you do nothing about this kid?" he said plaintively. "Have a little pity. How's it going to sound if

there's a big bank robbery up the street and I can't get to it and, when the sergeant asks me why, I have to tell him I was busy serving a summons on some guy that's got a cast-iron weather vane on his house?"

Nanny looked sympathetic. "That *will* be awkward," she replied. "But, as I see it, there's really no alternative. You'll just have to tell him that that's what you were doing—and, of course, explain that it wasn't your fault. After all, you're not responsible for a silly law like that."

"Sure," Hal agreed. "You *are* responsible for seeing that all the laws are enforced, though. So, give the Hallorans a ticket, then I'll show you where the other cars and garbage cans and weather vane are."

"The Hallorans?" the policeman asked.

Hal pointed to the illegally parked car. "It belongs to the Hallorans," he replied. He then pointed to the house on the corner. "That's where they live."

The older policeman looked toward the house. He shrugged and sighed. "Well, duty's duty," he said, getting out his book of summonses. "But, oh, for the good old days, when a man had more of a pick of the laws he wanted to enforce."

Nanny smiled approvingly at Hal, then turned and walked back toward Ferenci Vanalps' car, followed by Ferenci Vanalps.

"Are you actually going to leave that unprotected child with those policemen?" Ferenci asked.

"Of course," she replied. "He couldn't be safer, or in better hands. And, very shortly, I'm sure, they'll all be enjoying themselves immensely, handing out summonses. I wouldn't be surprised if they made a game out of it, you know?"

"You know, something strange . . ." Ferenci replied. "I've only known you for about an hour and already I have the feeling that I'm in over my head."

He opened the car door so that Nanny could get in. "There's something other-worldly about you," he said.

"No one ever has really understood the British," Nanny mused.

Ferenci closed the car door. The hood popped up. When he walked to the front of the car and slammed the hood, the trunk lid flew up. Moments later, when he slammed the trunk lid closed, the left rear door swung open. Closing the left rear door resulted in the hood flying up. As Ferenci marched toward the front of the car to slam the hood once more, Nanny was tempted to counsel him on the value of gentleness again. But she changed her mind, deciding to let him figure out for himself that in most circumstances violence was not the most efficient means of attaining a desired result.

In the kitchen of the Everett house, after long searching, Butch and Prudence finally found a good deed to do that appealed to them.

"How big is a German band?" Prudence asked Butch.

"It says here in the paper that there's a dozen players in it," Butch replied.

"Is a German dozen the same as an American dozen —twelve?" she asked.

"Who knows?" Butch answered. "Look it up," he suggested. "Or, you can count them when they get here."

"You don't even know that they'll come," his sister said.

"Why won't they? This story in the paper says that they're stranded. Do you know what that means? That means they're stuck here, without any way to get home. Some guy told them that if they came over

here from this little town in Germany where they live they'd make a lot of money playing concerts, only, when they got here, he took all the money they brought with them and told them he'd put it in a safe place and they haven't seen him since."

"That's the part I don't understand," Prudence said. "Why haven't they seen him since? Have they been too busy playing concerts?"

"He took their money and left them flat," Butch told her. "He didn't have any places for them to play concerts, he was a crook."

"Then why don't they just get on a plane and go home?" Prudence asked. "That's how they got here, isn't it, on a plane?"

"That costs money. Somebody's getting some money for them. But while they wait, they need a place to stay. Didn't you hear *any*thing I said to you when I was reading that story in the paper?"

"You didn't read anything that said that planes cost money," Prudence replied. "If you leave out the important facts, how am I supposed to know?"

Butch shook his head in disgust, then left the table, taking the newspaper with him, and went to the kitchen telephone.

"How do you know who to call?" Prudence asked.

"It's these people at the airport who take care of people who get stranded," he replied. "It says so right here in the paper." He raised the receiver, then dialed. "I'll ask the Operator," he said. "The Operator never knows anything herself but she always knows somebody who does know."

Butch was soon connected with the Operator. She, in turn, connected him with the switchboard at the airport, and, within a short time he was talking to the person who had got stuck with the responsibility of caring for a German band. That person, who had the

voice of a young woman, seemed to be bordering on a state of hysteria. She promised to dispatch the band immediately to the address that Butch gave her and then she spent the next several minutes blessing him for his kindness.

"I'll bet they'll be glad to get away from her," Butch said to Prudence after he had hung up. "She sounded like a loony."

"I could hear her all the way over here," Prudence said. "Gee, she had a deep voice."

"That wasn't her, that was the tuba," Butch told her. "I think there was a parade going on out there at the airport. It sounded like it—all that marching music. Well," he said, heading for the door, "that band ought to be here soon. We better watch for them."

Prudence left the table and trotted after him. "Maybe we better stand out in front," she said. "How will they be able to read our house number? It's not in German."

"Germans all know English," Butch advised her. "All those Germans we see on TV in those old war movies, none of them talk in German."

"I guess you're right," Prudence replied.

They reached the front window and halted and looked out. An old, dilapidated car had pulled up in front. A door opened and Nanny got out. A moment later she was joined by a long-haired young man who had arrived from the opposite side of the car. There was a short delay, while, squinting, the man estimated the distance between the curb and his front tire. Then, with Nanny leading the way, the two walked toward the house.

"I guess Nanny found somebody who got stranded, too," Prudence said.

The front door opened and Nanny and the young man entered. Butch and Prudence called out to

Nanny, and, smiling, she led the young man to where they were standing and introduced him to them.

"Is that a German name?" Prudence asked.

"Ferenci or Vanalps?" Ferenci asked. Then he shook his head. "No, my dear, sorry, but it's not. It's, believe it or not, as American as pizza pie."

"Why did you ask that?" Nanny said to Prudence.

"We may need somebody who speaks German," she replied.

"Oh, well, then, I'm the chap you want," Ferenci said. "My name isn't German, but I studied the German language in high school. I was quite good at it, too, although no one ever realized it because my grades gave such a false picture." He looked around. "Which way to the kitchen?" he asked. "I like a snack before lunch."

"You told me that your main interest in coming here was to meet Professor Everett," Nanny said.

"'Convert,' I said, not 'meet,'" Ferenci replied. "But you certainly don't expect me to convert on an empty stomach, do you?"

Nanny waggled a finger. "This way," she said, turning and walking toward the entrance to a hallway.

"To the kitchen?" Ferenci asked, hurrying after her.

"To the Professor," she answered.

When they reached the door to the Professor's office, Nanny and Ferenci halted and Nanny knocked. The immediate response was a "Shhhhhhhh!" from inside. Then, moments later, the door opened. The Professor looked out, saw Nanny, then looked at Ferenci, then stepped back and opened the door wider.

"Come in," Professor Everett said. "I didn't know we had a guest."

Ferenci looked back over his shoulder.

"He means you," Nanny advised Ferenci. Then she introduced him to the Professor and told Professor Everett how she had met Ferenci and what had occurred at the candy company.

"Not only have you had an eventful morning, it also sounds successful," Professor said when she had finished. "I hope mine turns out the same way." He pointed to a beaker of clear liquid that was sitting on his desk. "That's the chemical I told you about," he said.

Nanny, followed again by Ferenci, went to the desk and leaned forward and peered at the liquid. "Will it really clean all the icky out of smoke?" she said. "It looks like plain water."

"It's heavier, thicker," Professor Everett said, "or, at least, it's in the process of getting that way. That's why I asked for quiet when you knocked. The chemical is sensitive, as I mentioned before, I believe, and a loud sound or jarring would disturb it."

"I don't believe I really understand that," Ferenci said, looking at Professor Everett dubiously.

"Well, let's see . . . how can I explain it? Oh, I know! Think of it as jello. Jello, when it's first made, is like water. But then, gradually, it thickens, right?"

Ferenci nodded. "Actually, you're making jello is that what you're telling me?"

The Professor shook his head. "It's an anti-pollution solution," he said. "You see, it will break down the properties, the particles that pollute and . . ." A vacant expression had appeared on Ferenci's face. "Technically, it will wash the icky out of smoke," the Professor said.

Ferenci looked at the chemical once more, then faced Professor Everett again. His expression had become dubious once more. "I suppose you have papers to prove it or something," he said, "but, the fact is,

you don't look at all like a scientist." He stared hard at the Professor. "Where are the beady eyes?"

Nanny explained. "He has the notion that all scientists are mad scientists, devoted to concocting bigger and better bombs and poisons," she told the Professor.

Professor Everett laughed. "I haven't built a bomb or mixed a poison since I was ten-years-old and got my first chemistry set for Christmas," he said.

Ferenci continued to study him closely. "That's the truth?"

"I swear."

Ferenci grinned. "I believe you," he told the Professor. "And, to prove it, I accept your hospitality. I'll stay here with you in your house until—" he gestured vaguely, "until a new protest calls me."

Professor Everett turned Nanny. "What exactly did I do to deserve that?" he asked.

"I rather suspect that he would have accepted your hospitality even if your answer had been completely the opposite," she replied. "Mr. Vanalps is, I think, in need of bed and board."

"That has nothing to do with it!" Ferenci said crossly. "Absolutely nothing. I've decided to stay here for a while because—" he turned his attention to the Professor again, "because, in that man, I see the hope of mankind," he said.

Professor Everett laughed again. "Well, that's two of us who picture me that way," he said. "But if you plan to stay here until you find a third, you'll have to start helping make the payments on the mortgage because you'll be a permanent resident."

"I'm serious," Ferenci said. "You just don't realize how rare you are. You're a scientist, a real scientist, who has turned his back on bombs."

"Is that wise?" Nanny asked.

"What I mean is," Ferenci said to her, "this man would not build a bomb even if he had the opportunity." He addressed the Professor again. "I have a feeling about things like this," he said. "And it's my feeling that the country is finally ready for a man like you. You can have a brilliant political career. If, that is, you have me to manage you."

Professor Everett was shaking his head. "I don't . . ."

"You could be President!" Ferenci told him, excited by the idea. "The people would love you. A scientist who would pledge to forsake this mad policy of making bigger and bigger and bigger bombs! You would be a saint! They would adore you! And they would feel safe with you as the President!"

"I don't quite . . ."

"Because," Ferenci said, "they would know that if the worst came to the worst and forsaking bombs did not work, you would know how to make a bigger and bigger bomb."

"I do not choose to run," the Professor told him.

Ferenci dismissed the statement. "They all say that," he said. "But you'll run. You'll realize that it's your patriotic duty. Besides, your followers will refuse to take no for an answer. They'll draft you to run."

"What followers?"

"We'll hire some," Ferenci told him. "First, though," he went on, "we'll need a catchy slogan. A slogan that will capture the imagination of the public. Something that says everything, yet, at the same time, says nothing."

"I suppose this is flattering," Professor Everett said. "However . . ."

"You're right," Ferenci nodded, "a slogan just isn't

that important, when your campaign manager hasn't even had his pre-lunch snack yet. Which way to the kitchen?"

"Up the hall and to your right," Professor Everett replied.

Ferenci saluted and departed.

"I'm sorry," Nanny said to the Professor. "I'll get rid of him immediately."

"No, no, that's all right," he replied, smiling. "The minute you kicked him out, I'd suddenly realize that it was my patriotic duty to run for President and there I'd be without a campaign manager."

"I'm sure you realize," Nanny said, "that Mr. Vanalps is not a campaign manager. He is a free-loader."

The Professor shrugged. "I like him. He's pleasant and he dislikes pollution and well, he apparently needs a place, temporarily, to bed and board. That's reason enough not to boot him out."

"You know, he's right, you *are* a nice scientist," Nanny said.

" 'The hope of mankind,' I think, is what he said about me," Professor Everett replied.

"Well, he meant 'nice,' " Nanny said, heading for the doorway. "Will you be having lunch at home today?"

"Yes," the Professor answered, tagging after her. "By the way . . ." he halted and closed his office door, then continued along the hallway with Nanny, "have you seen the children around? I told them where I'd be if they needed me but I haven't heard a word from them."

"I saw Hal when Mr. Vanalps and I were driving home from the candy company," she said. "You'll be happy to know that he's quite serious about this idea of making the world a better place to live in. He was assisting two policemen."

"Good, good," Professor Everett said, delighted. Then he frowned. "I hope they didn't think he was interfering or anything like that."

"One of them seemed unable to decide quite what to make of it," Nanny replied.

"It is a little unusual, I suppose."

Nanny nodded. "I gathered that *he* had that impression, too," she said.

"Well, I'm sure that . . ."

The doorbell was ringing.

"Are you expecting anyone?" Nanny asked, as they entered the foyer.

"No." The Professor smiled. "Maybe it's Mr. Vanalps' luggage being delivered," he suggested.

"If it is," Nanny said crisply, heading for the door, "I'll have it sent right back to where . . ." She opened the door, then stared, startled.

Professor Everett joined her. His reaction was the same. He peered interestedly but puzzledly at the crowd that his son, Hal, had brought to the house. The policemen, he assumed, were the two that Nanny had told him that Hal had been helping. But why, he wondered, had all the others, who he recognized as nearby neighbors, decided to call on him at the same time.

CHAPTER FOUR

For a moment, the Professor continued to stare in bafflement at the party of neighbors that had gathered outside the front door with Hal and the two policemen. Then he felt Nanny nudging him and he realized that they were all waiting for him to say something.

"Uhhhhhhhh . . ." he said.

The older policeman addressed Hal. "Is this your father?" he asked sternly.

Hal nodded.

The policeman addressed the Professor next. "Is this your son?" he inquired.

"Yes. Yes, of course," Professor Everett replied, still perplexed. Speaking to Hal and indicating the policemen and neighbors, he said, lowering his voice

slightly, "Are they with you . . . uh, or against you?"

One of the neighbors spoke up. "It's nothing like that, Professor," she said. She was a small, scrawny woman, whom the Professor recognized as Mrs. Alexander. "It's just that we're sure that you don't know what's going on," she continued, obviously controlling her temper, "and we're sure that when you find out, you'll want to speak to Hal about it."

"According to these good citizens," the policeman told the Professor, "your son is a public nuisance."

"No, no, no," another woman said. Her name, the Professor recalled, was Halloran. "No, it's nothing like that. Hal is simply a little misguided, that's all."

"It seems to me," the policeman said, "that just a minute ago, while I was handing out summonses, there was some talk about a 'public nuisance.' "

"That's right!" another neighbor said. "Let's call a spade a spade. He's fingering us! He's worse than a public nuisance—he's an informer!"

"A squealer!" another neighbor shouted.

The older policeman raised a hand. "Easy does it," he said. "We'll have no mob-rule." Then he addressed the Professor again. "The trouble in a nut shell is this, these good citizens here are riled up because your son has been reporting violations of the statutes and, doing it in front of me and my partner, so that, no matter what we think, we got to give out a lot of summonses. Now me, I'm as neutral as a judge on the whole thing. But they're a little upset about it. Because, they say, and who can deny it, the police have got something a little bit better to do than turning in good citizens for loose lids and cast-iron weather vanes."

"What?" Professor Everett replied, still baffled.

"May I say something?" Hal asked.

"I think you better," his father told him. "Is this the result of what we were talking about this morning at breakfast?"

Hal nodded. "I've been taking these two policemen around the neighborhood and showing them where the laws are being broken," he said. "They're giving out tickets. Only, I guess it's like I thought. Most people don't want all the laws to be obeyed, not if they have to obey them all themselves."

"That is *not* true!" Mrs. Alexander said indignantly. "I, for one, think all laws should be obeyed and by everyone. But that law about cast-iron weather vanes is absolutely ridiculous."

Seeing that the Professor was looking puzzled again, Nanny explained that there was an ordinance that forbade the possession of cast-iron weather vanes. "It was sponsored, I'm told, by the people who manufactured wooden weather vanes," she went on. "It is, of course, a ridiculous law, just as Mrs. Alexander says. But, nonetheless, it's a law. And Mrs. Alexander has just told us that she believes that *all* laws should be obeyed by everyone."

"*That* is not the point," Mrs. Alexander said coldly.

"I agree," Mrs. Halloran said. "The point is that Hal is making a nuisance of himself. These policemen have more important things to do than to worry about how far my car is parked from the curb."

"Or whether or not my lid is on tight," another neighbor said.

"It's like I told your son," the older policeman said to the Professor, "while my partner and me was following him around and checking on garbage can lids, a bank could have been being robbed up the street."

"How many bank robberies a day do you get in this neighborhood?" the Professor asked.

"Well, none, so far, that I know of," the policeman

replied. "But it could happen any day now. And, if your boy has his way, you know where I'll be if it does? I'll be writing somebody a summons for a cast-iron weather vane!"

"Excuse me," Nanny said to the policeman, "but are you telling us that, until now, you haven't done anything but wait for a bank robbery?"

"Who said anything like that?" the policeman answered. "Why, my partner and me, we catch law-breakers right and left."

"Then why do you object to catching the ones that Hal points out to you?" Nanny asked.

The younger policeman pulled at the older policeman's sleeve. They stepped aside and held a whispered conversation. Then they returned.

"I refuse to answer that," the older policeman said to Nanny, "on the grounds that, the way things are these days, no matter what I say to anybody at any time, it'll be used against me."

"Let's be logical about this," the Professor said, addressing the whole group. "Now, Hal feels that laws ought to be obeyed. Is there any objection to that?"

"Of course not," Mrs. Alexander said. "Everybody agrees with that. But we're talking about regular laws. Not a silly law that makes it a crime to have a cast-iron weather vane."

Professor Everett smiled. "In fact, then, you *don't* believe that *all* laws should be obeyed, is that right?" he said to Mrs. Alexander.

She glared at him. "If you refuse to be serious about this, then I will not discuss it with you!" she said. She turned and strode away.

"Now, then, continuing," the Professor said, "let's examine the question of whether or not we should obey the law regarding garbage can lids. Hal feels, as I said, that since it is a law of the . . ."

"Excuse me," one of the neighbors broke in, "but I think I left something heating on the stove." She hurried away.

"That reminds me," Mrs. Halloran said. "I have a million things to do today." She fluttered a hand at the others. "Some other time . . ." she said, departing.

Within seconds, all but one of the neighbors had gone.

"Break it up!" the older policeman said gruffly to the one neighbor who was left.

She scurried away.

"Sir, that was a good lesson you taught them people," the older policeman said to the Professor. "From now on, they'll think twice, I'll bet." He put a hand on Hal's shoulder. "And you can be proud of this boy, too," he said to Professor Everett. "Why without him, we might have had a cast-iron weather vane crime wave on our hands. And don't think I'm cracking a joke, saying that, either. You know, years ago, we didn't hardly hear a thing about the dangers of drugs and dope and that stuff. But look at it today. And the same could happen with cast-iron weather vanes. Except that your son here nipped it in the bud."

"I *am* proud of him," the Professor replied.

"I'm not finished," Hal told them. "There are still a lot of laws that are being broken in the neighborhood. I've got a whole list. Almost everybody for about six blocks around is breaking one law or another."

The others all stared at him, speechless.

The older policeman finally spoke. "Yes sir, that's a boy to be proud of, all right," he said wearily. "Give him a couple years and there won't be any problems anywhere. He'll have everybody in jail for law-breaking. And, without people running around, who's going to cause the problems?"

"Hal . . ." the Professor said. He frowned thoughtfully. "I'm not exactly sure how to say this . . . what I mean is . . . well, you see . . ."

"You mean you want me to stop?" Hal asked.

"Yes," the older policeman said gruffly.

"No," Professor Everett put in quickly.

"Okay, then," Hal said, "I'll keep at it." He motioned to the policeman. "We better get back to work," he said. "We've got so much to do as it is, I don't see how we'll even have time for lunch."

"Hal . . ." the Professor said.

"Yes, sir," Hal replied, halting.

"When I said 'no,'" Professor Everett told him, "I didn't mean that I didn't want you to stop. I meant that I didn't want you to stop because of an order from me. In other words, if you stop, I want it to be because *you* want to stop. Understand?"

"Sure," Hal replied. "I don't want to stop, though."

"But, Hal, dear," Nanny said, "has it occurred to you that none of us is going to have any friends in the neighborhood any more if you continue this law enforcement program?"

"I can't let a thing like that bother me," Hal answered. "As I see it, if a law is being broken, it's my duty to report it to a policeman." He turned to the older policeman. "That's right, isn't it, sir?"

The older policeman sagged. "That's right, son," he replied wearily.

Hal faced his father. "If I saw some law-breaking, you wouldn't want me to look the other way just because it was being done by a friend, would you?" he said.

Professor Everett shook his head. "No, no, of course not," he replied.

"Then I guess we all agree," Hal said. He started out again.

The policemen looked at Professor Everett. The older policeman closed his eyes and said something under his breath. Then they followed Hal but without enthusiasm.

"I suppose Hal is right," Nanny said softly, when they had gone.

"I *know* he's right," Professor Everett said. "But," he added, "Since I *know* he's right, why is it that, in the back of my mind, I have the feeling that he's wrong?"

"Don't ask me," Nanny replied. "If you have any questions about what's happening, I'm afraid you'll have to answer them yourself. This is all your doing, you know?"

Professor Everett pointed in the direction in which Hal and the two policemen had gone. "That was *my* doing?" he replied.

"You're the one who suggested that, instead of enjoying ourselves, we all do something to make the world a better place in which to live," she reminded him. "And that's exactly what your son is doing. You can't deny that with all the lids on tight and the cars parked less than a dozen inches from the curb and cast-iron weather vanes done away with the world will certainly be a better place." She looked at him amusedly. "Can you?"

Professor Everett laughed, then said, "Well, there *is* something to be said for tight lids. I'm not sure, though, that . . ." he had started to close the door, then had stopped. "That getting all the neighbors . . ." Interrupting himself, he pointed toward the street. "Mr. Vanalps didn't say anything about inviting his friends to stay with him, did he?" he asked.

Nanny looked in the direction in which he was pointing. An airport bus had stopped in front of the house. It was disgorging what looked like a small

army. The men were in uniform and they appeared to be carrying their weapons in cases that had been designed originally to hold musical instruments.

"Is that how they carry their bombs?" Professor Everett asked.

"I really don't believe those are Mr. Vanalps' friends," Nanny said. "They look too . . . too . . . what I mean is, I don't see one long hair among them."

"I guess this is where they think they're going," the Professor said, as the men marched toward the house. He chuckled. "They're going to be surprised when they find out they've made a mistake and . . . Oh-oh . . . that bus is pulling away without them. I better stop it!" He began waving. "Wait! Wait!"

"Professor . . ."

"I've got to stop it!"

"You're too late to stop the bus. It's gone," Nanny informed him. "But look at the passengers. They're waving back at you. They think you were welcoming them."

From behind Nanny and the Professor, Butch spoke. "Hey, that's great, Dad," he said. "I didn't know you could talk German."

"It's news to me, too," the Professor said, looking back at Butch.

"He didn't talk it, he waved it," Prudence said, joining the others in the doorway. "And it looked like a wave in English to me. So, I guess you're right, Butch, they *do* talk the same language we do."

Professor Everett and Nanny looked at each other. Then, together, they looked at the group of men who had arrived by bus. The men were still waving, standing several yards away, apparently waiting for an invitation.

"I get the impression that you can explain this," the Professor said to Butch.

"Sure," Butch replied. "They're our good deed. Why're you looking that way? It was your idea."

"You told us to make the world a better place to live in," Prudence reminded him.

The Professor leaned slightly in the direction of the visitors. "How do they fit into that?" he asked.

Butch and Prudence told him about reading the story in the newspaper about the stranded German band, and about telephoning the airport and inviting the members of the band to stay at the Everett home until they could make arrangements to return to Germany.

"I think that's sweet," Nanny said. "Why, I read that story, too. And it never occurred to me to invite these men to stay with us. Professor, you have good reason to be just as proud of Butch and Prudence as you are of Hal."

The Professor nodded dimly. "Yes, it's about even," he said. He looked at the German band again. "But what are we going to do with them?"

"Oh, we'll fit them in," Nanny said confidently. "Always room for one more, as the saying goes. There are only . . ." she began counting, "mmmmmm . . . well, actually, there are a dozen of them. Still, though, we'll manage."

"They'll probably want to go right to bed when we let them in," Prudence said.

"Why do you think that, dear?" Nanny asked.

"Boy, I know I'd be tired if I'd been waving as long as they have."

"Oh, yes," Nanny said. To the Professor, she said, "I think they're waiting for you to respond in some way. Make some gesture. It would be kind of you to at least allow them to let off that waving."

"How?" the Professor asked. "I wasn't waving to them in the first place. How do you rescind a wave that was meant for a bus but that was intercepted by a German band?"

"Speak to them," she suggested.

"All right." The Professor faced the members of the band, raised his hand in a casual salute, and said, "Hi!"

Instantly, they stopped waving. Then, to a man, they raised a hand in a casual salute and replied, "Hi!"

"At this rate," the Professor said, "we'll be out here in the front of the house the whole time they're here. Does anyone else have a suggestion?"

"That stranded man that Nanny found said he speaks German," Butch said.

"That's right, he did say that," Nanny nodded. "All right, Butch, you go and find Mr. Vanalps and explain the problem to him. In the meantime, we'll try to get these gentlemen into the house."

Butch departed.

"How are you going to get them inside?" Professor Everett asked. "Push or pull?"

"Sign language," Nanny replied. At the same time, she began backing toward the front door and motioning for the men to follow.

"It's working!" Prudence said.

"I just hope they understand," the Professor said to Nanny, "that you're only inviting them into the house. They looked so pleased about the whole thing."

"Wouldn't you, if you were stranded, and you were finally having some interest shown you?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Maybe we ought to leave them outside, though," Prudence said. "Have you noticed? In those bright red

and yellow and blue uniforms they sort of look like they belong on the lawn."

The Professor and Prudence moved through the doorway, followed by Nanny, who was still motioning. Moments later, the members of the German band began to enter. At the same time, Ferenci Vanalps appeared from the direction of the kitchen, accompanied by Butch.

"It's really a German band!" Ferenci said.

"That's what I told you," Butch said.

"I know. But I thought that was a trick to get me out of the kitchen." To the Professor, he said, "You know, I read about a German band that got stranded. We ought to take this band to that band and introduce them. I imagine they'd have a lot in common."

"This is both of them," the Professor replied. "My son and daughter . . . oh-oh, it's getting a little crowded in here. Nanny, watch it . . . the tuba . . ."

Members of the German band continued to crowd into the foyer. Before long, Professor Everett, Nanny, Ferenci Vanalps, Butch and Prudence were pushed back into a corner. The Germans, clutching their instrument cases and beaming, waited for some further order.

"You're the one who speaks German," Nanny said to Ferenci Vanalps. "Say something to them."

"It's been so long since I spoke the language," Ferenci replied. "I'm really not sure that I can still . . . Well, I'll give it a try." He focused on the German who was nearest him, the tuba player. "*Guten Tag!*" he said.

The German grinned broadly. "*Hallo!*" he replied.

"I did it!" Ferenci said, surprised and delighted. "I actually spoke to him and got an answer! Isn't that marvelous?"

"I think that's the way it's supposed to work," the

Professor told him. "Now, explain to them that they're welcome here until they can make arrangements to get home, at least. And tell them that we'll, somehow, manage to provide sleeping accommodations and meals. Got that?"

"I've got it but I'm not sure I can say it," Ferenci replied. "What's German for 'accommodations?' "

"You're the one who knows the language," Professor Everett reminded him.

" 'Accommodations,' though, I think, is advanced German," Ferenci said. "I was still in 'basic' when I dropped the subject. Let's try to think of a word that's a bit less . . ."

"Look." Nanny broke in. "I think the problem is solved."

The tuba player had got a paperback book from his pocket and had opened it. He was now paging through it, looking determined.

"Yes, that's probably one of those phrase books," Professor Everett said. "It will allow him to speak to us in English."

"Why does he need that?" Prudence asked. "The Germans in the old movies never need phrase books to speak English."

"He's never been an actor in an old movie, I suspect," Nanny explained to her.

"Oh," she nodded.

The tuba player grinned again. "Hello," he said.

"It works that way, from German to English, too!" Ferenci said, astounded and pleased once more.

"Is it cold enough for you today?" the tuba player asked, beaming.

"Oh-oh," Ferenci said.

"Daddy . . . it's summer," Prudence said. "Why did he ask if it's cold enough for us?"

"I think what he has is a book of common phrases

that are used in this country," the Professor replied. "He doesn't really understand what he's saying." He addressed Ferenci again. "That phrase book of his won't work," he said. "Try your German."

Ferenci looked thoughtful for a moment. Then he brightened and spoke to the tuba player once more. This time he managed a full sentence. When he had finished, the tuba player stared at him in complete perplexity for several seconds. Then he shrugged, bent down and removed his shoe and stuffed it into the bell of his musical instrument.

"For a German, he certainly doesn't understand his native language very well," Ferenci said.

"What did you say to him?" Professor Everett asked.

"I simply told him that the whole band is welcome and that he and his fellow musicians can stay here until they make arrangements to return home. The misunderstanding, I'm sure, is his fault. Even if I tried, I couldn't make what I acutally said sound like 'stuff your shoe in your tuba.' I don't know the language that well."

"He's going to try his phrase book again," Nanny said, indicating the tuba player.

Smiling hopefully and pointing to the shoe in the bell of the horn, the German said, "Pardon me, but does this bus go to Philadelphia?"

"*Ja!*" Ferenci answered.

Looking greatly relieved, the tuba player removed the shoe from the tuba and bent down and began putting it back on his foot.

"I've got the hang of it, now!" Ferenci said.

"Don't let a little success go to your head," Professor Everett cautioned. "Let's try something a little more difficult. Ask him if he has any idea how long his band will be here."

Ferenci scowled, recalling the German he had learned in high school, then addressed the tuba player once more, speaking slowly and distinctly.

When Ferenci finished, the German consulted the paperback book again. After a second, he responded. "Two eggs, sunnyside up, with mashed potatoes and a cup of cauliflower—hold the mayo," he replied.

"That's clear enough. They're hungry," Ferenci reported to the others.

"But it doesn't answer the question," Nanny pointed out.

"What he was saying was that they refuse to answer any questions until they have something to eat," Ferenci told her. "Can you blame them? They probably haven't had any food for days."

"What makes you think that?" Professor Everett asked.

"I can sense it," Ferenci replied. "But, if you don't believe me, watch this." He spoke to the tuba player again. "*Nahrung!*" he said.

"*Ja!*" the German responded, looking especially pleased.

"What does that mean?" Professor Everett asked.

"What I said was 'food,'" Ferenci replied. "What he said was that he could eat a horse." Once more, he spoke to the Germans. "*Achtung!*" he barked. Then, motioning, he headed for the kitchen. "*Nahrung! Nahrung!*" Ferenci called out. The Germans, taking their instrument cases with them, began crowding after him.

Ferenci looked back. An expression of apprehension appeared on his face at the sight of the horde of uniformed Germans that was following him. Facing forward, he moved faster. The German band increased its pace. Ferenci fled! The Germans pounded after him. A few seconds later the entire group disappeared

into the kitchen. There was the sound of a crash. The whole house shuddered. A brief period of total silence followed. Then sounds were heard again—pleasant conversation and the rattling of dishes and utensils.

"This may be the end of family life as we have known it," Professor Everett said. "I have a feeling that Ferenci Vanalps and that German band have moved in on us to stay."

"Nonsense," Nanny said. "It's temporary, I'm sure. However," she added, "if they really bother you, I'll send them packing, all of them."

Professor Everett smiled. "I'm not sure you could," he replied. "But, no, let's let them stay. After all, they were invited."

"Butch and Prudence invited the Germans," Nanny replied. "But who invited Ferenci Vanalps?"

"Ferenci Vanalps," the Professor answered.

Nanny laughed. "That's true," she replied. "And, besides, we need him now. He's the only one in the house who can speak German."

"Including the Germans," Butch said. "All they know is what they read in that book. And that's English, isn't it?"

"I'm not . . ." Nanny began.

She was interrupted by the sound of another crash from the direction of the kitchen.

"If you'll excuse me," Nanny said to the Professor and the children. "I think I better see to my bailiwick before our guests completely destroy it." She headed toward the kitchen.

"Remind Mr. Vanalps about my experiment," Professor Everett called after her. "It needs peace and quiet." He looked worried. "I hope it wasn't affected by that first crash," he said, moving in the direction of the hallway that would take him to his office. "I better check on it."

Butch and Prudence tagged after him.

"What could happen?" Prudence asked.

"The consistency could be changed," Professor Everett replied.

"Oh. But what could happen?"

"It's supposed to be thick, like jello," her father told her. "But, if it's disturbed, it will become thin, like water."

"What flavor is it?" Butch asked.

"It isn't any flavor."

"What does it have in it?" Prudence inquired. "I like it best with oranges and bananas."

"It doesn't have anything in it," Professor Everett replied. "It isn't jello. It's a chemical that—if it works—will remove impuri . . . what I mean is, it will take the icky out of smoke. I told you about it at breakfast this morning, remember?"

"You didn't say it was jello, though," Butch said.

"It isn't—Well, nevermind."

They reached the door to the Professor's office. He opened it carefully and peeked in.

"It looks good from here," he said, almost whispering.

"I can't see," Prudence complained.

Professor Everett entered the office and, followed by Prudence and Butch, walked softly toward the desk, where the beaker containing the chemical was sitting. When he got within a yard of the desk, he stopped and put out a hand, halting his son and daughter.

"That's it, huh?" Butch said, seemingly unimpressed by the nearly colorless liquid.

"If it works it could be a great benefit to mankind," the Professor said. "It would help end air pollution. As I mentioned, it would take the icky out of smoke and at very little cost. There's even a possibility that it

could be used to clean the carbon monoxide that comes from the exhaust pipes of cars."

"Boy, I guess that would really be something," Butch said. His enthusiasm was obviously forced, however.

"I think you would probably appreciate it a little more if you were older," Professor Everett said. He looked at Prudence. "What do you think of it?" he asked.

"It's fine," she replied. She frowned. "But wouldn't it be an even better benefit to mankind if it had some bananas and oranges sliced up in it?"

"I'll consider the suggestion," the Professor promised.

CHAPTER FIVE

When Nanny arrived in the kitchen she found Ferenci Vanalps playing host to the German band. He was removing leftovers from the refrigerator and handing them to the tuba player, who was passing them along to the other members of the band. The leftovers were finally arriving at the table, where, shortly, Nanny assumed, they would become a feast.

Nanny stood just inside the kitchen doorway for a few moments, listening and looking. She realized that if she did not take steps the entire food supply would soon be completely gone. Yet Professor Everett was insisting on treating the guests like guests. Unfortunately, Ferenci and the Germans were using his cordiality as if it were a license to loot the larder.

"There's ham on this first platter," Ferenci told the tuba player, "and I've got what's left over from a

roast duck coming up. Arrange them side by side on the table, will you? It'll make a gorgeous picture."

While holding the phrase book in one hand, the tuba player accepted the first platter from Ferenci and then passed it on. Reading from the book, he responded to Ferenci with what he assumed to be an appropriate phrase.

"I'll put this on my expense account," the tuba player said.

"Here comes the duck," Ferenci told him, handing him the second platter.

"I gave at the office," the tuba player replied, passing the platter along to the next musician in line.

Ferenci took a covered bowl from the refrigerator, raised the lid, and looked inside. "Fancy green beans," he reported. He sniffed. "In a vinegar sauce," he added.

"I do not have the exact change," the tuba player said, "but I will pay you the rest of what I owe you the next time I come in."

Ferenci recovered the bowl and handed it to him. "Easy does it with this," he cautioned. "Don't spill the sauce."

"Where is this town of Broken Bow, Nebraska, to which the airline has mistakenly sent my luggage?" the tuba player said, reading and transferring the bowl to the next in line at the same time.

Nanny moved closer to where Ferenci and the Germans were at work. When the Germans saw her they called out a warm greeting. "*Hallo!*"

As a result, Ferenci looked back over his shoulder. Seeing her, he joined in the welcome, in his own fashion. "Hi," he said. "That duck is okay, but don't you think that—in most cases—turkey goes better with ham? Listen, do you have a really sharp carving knife?"

The tuba player, not knowing what had been said, apparently thought that it was his turn to speak. "I'm not going to rake the leaves this year," he said, "I'm going to let them turn to mulch."

"This is preposterous," Nanny said to Ferenci. "It isn't a conversation. He has no idea at all what he's saying."

Ferenci faced back to the open refrigerator. "What's different about that?" he replied. "Most people don't really realize what they're saying."

"What happened to your expert knowledge of German?" Nanny asked.

"I'm rustier than I thought," Ferenci answered. He handed the tuba player several green peppers that he had taken from the vegetable drawer of the refrigerator. "He understands my English better than I speak his German." He looked up at the tuba player. "Right, fella?" he said.

"Those aren't termites, they're flying ants," the German replied cheerfully, reading from the phrase book.

"You call that understanding?" Nanny said. "You two aren't communicating."

"I got him out here to the kitchen, didn't I?" Ferenci replied. "We're raiding your refrigerator together, aren't we? If that isn't communicating, what is?"

"Perhaps you're right . . ." Nanny admitted.

"That'll be enough for the snack," Ferenci said, closing the refrigerator door. "We want to save some for lunch." To Nanny, he said, "Now, the carving knife . . ."

"It's dull," she replied quickly.

"Good, good," Ferenci said. "Where is it?"

"But you said you wanted a sharp caving knife."

"No, I didn't. I asked you if you had a sharp carving

knife. If it was sharp, I wanted to dull it. A sharp knife cuts too thin. With a dull knife, you can cut off big chunks, you know."

Nanny pointed to the knife-holder which was hanging on the wall over the counter.

"Fifty cents worth, and check the oil and water and battery and tires," the tuba player said, evidently not wanting to be left out of the conversation.

"And clean the windshield," Ferenci added, selecting a knife from the holder. He sighted along the cutting edge of the knife and whistled. "Looks razor-sharp to me," he said. "That's dangerous. Sharp knives cut so thinly, a man could starve to death." He whacked the knife on the metal edge of the counter several times. "That ought to dull it down a bit," he said, moving toward the table.

Nanny's eyes narrowed slightly. It was not going to be easy to continue treating Ferenci Vanalps like a guest, she realized.

"Now, then, for some food," Ferenci said to the tuba player. "How do you like your ham sliced? Thick, extra-thick or super-thick?"

"Row the boat around in a circle a while," he replied. "We paid for an hour and we're going to keep it out for an hour."

"Got it—super-thick," Ferenci nodded. "I like it that way myself." He placed the knife on the ham, positioning it approximately an inch from the edge. "I usually cut on a slant," he said, "so it'll be thicker at the bottom."

Nanny, looking grim, stared for an instant at the knife blade.

Ferenci sliced downward. The knife skimmed through the ham—and produced a slice that was about as thick as a piece of tissue paper.

"Impossible," Ferenci said, holding the slice up to

the light. "I could read through this." He dropped the slice of ham and looked at the knife. "What happened?" he asked. "Did I slant it in the wrong direction?"

"I think you did an excellent job," Nanny told him. "With slices like that, you'll be able to prepare a snack for the whole band and still have plenty left over for lunch."

"That's not how I planned it," Ferenci said. He looked at Nanny, then back at the knife. "Well . . . maybe I just didn't get it dull enough," he said. He went to the counter and whacked the blade against the metal edge several times more, then returned to the table. "This thing ought to cut like a rusty ax, now," he said, placing the knife in position once more.

"Is this the bus to Grant's Tomb?" the tuba player said, reading from his phrase book.

"You said it!" Ferenci agreed. Then, using a sawing motion, he began slicing the ham.

"Well, eat hearty," Nanny said, moving toward the doorway.

"Hold it!" Ferenci called.

Nanny halted.

"Look at that!" Ferenci said, pointing to the second slice of ham, which was as thin as the first. "How could that possibly happen?"

"I think it's obvious," Nanny replied. "You appear to be as expert at carving as you are at speaking the German language." Then, after treating Ferenci to a fleeting smile, she continued on her way, leaving the kitchen.

"I don't care what the Weather Bureau says," the tuba player called after her pleasantly, "I say this is the coldest winter in history!"

Nanny did not reply. Moving briskly, she proceeded to the entrance to the basement, then trotted

down the steps. She had noticed that the lights were on in the basement, so she was not surprised to find Professor Everett and Butch and Prudence there. They were in the Professor's workshop.

"Hiding?" Nanny asked, amused.

"No, no, carrying on," Professor Everett replied. "I'll be ready to test my anti-pollution chemical soon. That will require the use of smoke. And, to control the smoke, I'll need a chimney. So, I intend to build one. In miniature, of course."

"We're going to make a little smokestack," Prudence said, translating.

"Yes, I understand," Nanny smiled.

"Dad will build it," Butch told her. "We'll just help."

"I imagined that was probably how it would go," Nanny said. She began backing out of the workshop.

"Did you want me for something?" Professor Everett asked.

"No," she answered. "I came down for the cots. Those fold-away cots, you know? It appears that we're going to have one professional protester and one German band with us for some time. They'll need places to sleep, naturally. So, I thought I'd scatter the cots about upstairs, here and there, in the hallway and the various bedrooms and . . . well, wherever I can find a spare inch of space."

"Good idea," the Professor said. "Do you want me to carry the cots upstairs for you?"

"No, no, they're sticks and canvas, that's all—very light. I can manage. You carry on with your work. I think controlling pollution is really much more important than unfolding fold-away cots, don't you?"

"That's one of those questions that has plagued mankind since the beginning of time," the Professor replied. "In this instance, though, I'll bow to your

decision and stay here and work on my smokestack." He indicated the children. "Would you like to have Butch and Prudence help you? They're very big on good-deed-doing today."

"No, thank you," Nanny said quickly. "I'll try to muddle through on my own." She hurried out.

"Most ways, Nanny isn't much like most grown-ups," Prudence said. "But that's one way that she is."

"How's that?" her father asked.

"When she has a lot to do, she'd rather not have help," Butch said. "It doesn't make sense, if you think about it. But that's the way it is."

"Strange," the Professor agreed. He looked around the workshop. "Well, now, first, we'll need something cylindrical," he said.

"What color?" Prudence asked.

"Color? What difference does that make?"

"I was trying to get a hint about what cylindrical is," she replied. "I thought if I knew the color that might help me look."

"A cylinder is round and hollow," the Professor explained.

"Like a basketball?" Butch asked. "That's round and hollow." He frowned. "Hollow anyway, if you don't count the air." He brightened. "Hey! How about a flat basketball!" Then he frowned again. "But that isn't round any more, is it?"

"Not a basketball," his father said. "What I meant was something in the shape of a smokestack, that's cylindrical."

"Why didn't you say so?" Prudence asked. "I thought it would be harder than that. If you get something in the shape of a smokestack, it won't be much trouble making a chimney out of it." She looked at her father narrowly. "Isn't that cheating?"

The Professor was silent for a second. Then he shook his head slowly. "No," he replied. He began looking around the workshop again. "We don't have anything in that shape, anyway, apparently," he said. "So, we'll have to start from . . . Aha!" He pointed. "There, behind the bench, that sheet of tin," he said. "We can use that. We'll just bend it around and make a cylinder of it. Butch, can you get behind there and get it out?"

"Sure!" Butch replied enthusiastically. "I can put all those empty paint buckets together, see, and then put a board on top of them and sort of make a gigantic skate out of the whole thing and then roll under the bench. After I get under, I can push that tin thing out from behind."

"Uh, I fail to see the necessity for building the gigantic skate," Professor Everett said. "Couldn't you just crawl under the bench? Why do you have to roll under?"

Butch shrugged. "It looked like a good way," he replied. "We've got all those empty paint buckets."

"Let's do it the simple way. Crawl under," the Professor said.

"That's not very creative," Prudence told him.

"You don't even know what creative means," he replied. He pointed underneath the bench and addressed Butch again. "Any time you're ready," he said.

Butch ducked his head and crawled under.

"Creative is what Mary Beth Sweeney is," Prudence told her father.

"Oh, yes, she's the one who knits sweaters for bricks and calls them door-stops, isn't she?" He bent down and peered into the dimness under the bench. "Butch? How's it going?"

"Boy, this is neat!" Butch called out. "It's like a cave under here! Come on under!"

"Just push that sheet of tin out, will you, please," the Professor replied.

"Okay," Butch replied glumly.

"Mary Beth Sweeney has the biggest collection of door-stops in the world, she says," Prudence told her father. "She says if she built a patio out of them she'd have the only patio in the world that was wearing a sweater."

Professor Everett, distracted, stared at her. "What? A patio with a . . ."

He was interrupted by a loud, clattering sound that caused him to leap back, as if from an explosion. Butch had pushed the sheet of tin out from behind the bench and it had fallen to the floor.

"Boy, did you hear that!" Butch shouted, ecstatic.

"I *heard* it!" his father answered. "In fact, I'm *still* hearing it! It's echoing inside my head. I'll probably hear it the rest of my life." He sighed, then said, "All right . . . come on out. We've got the tin . . . let's get started on the project."

Butch appeared from under the bench. "You told me to push it," he said defensively.

"I know I did," the Professor replied, forcing a smile. "I'm not blaming you. Let's forget it and get started." He picked up the sheet of tin. "We're in luck," he said. "It's about the right size, I'd say."

"It's going to be awful short and awful big around," Prudence said.

"I'll bend it the other way," her father told her.

"Oh. Then it'll be tall and little around. That's better," she agreed. "It'll look a lot more like a chimney."

"Here's this," Butch said to the Professor, handing him a large hammer.

"What for?"

"To hit it with."

"I have no intention of hitting it," Professor Everett said. "I'm simply going to bend it and then clamp the two edges together. The result will be a cylinder or a chimney or smokestack."

Butch nodded, disappointed, and put the hammer back on the bench.

"Mary Beth Sweeney says," Prudence informed her father, "some night when it's cold and she's going out on her patio and her mother tells her to take a sweater, she'll say she doesn't have to."

"Why not?" Butch asked.

"She'll say the patio already has a sweater," Prudence replied.

"Butch," Professor Everett said, pointing to the far end of the sheet of tin, "will you get hold of it down there and help me bend it, please?"

"Wouldn't it be easier with a hammer?" Butch replied.

"No. Let me make the command decisions, will you? You'll be a lot more help to me if you'll just do as I ask you to do."

Butch got hold of the end of the sheet of tin and, imitating his father, bent it until the two edges met.

"Good—let's hold it that way," the Professor said. "Now . . . Prudence, will you hand me a few of those clamps, please?"

Prudence went to the bench. "What do they look like?" she asked.

"Like . . . uh . . . well, you squeeze them together, then you tighten the screws. Do you see anything there that looks like that?"

"I don't think so. What does something like that look like?"

Looking mildly stunned, Professor Everett pondered her question.

"If you want to know what I'll bet, I'll bet she gets

clopped right in the chops when she says that," Butch said.

His father turned to him. "Who? What are you talking about?"

"Mary Beth Sweeney when she tells her mother she has a sweater on and she doesn't," Butch explained.

"You missed part of the story," Professor Everett said. "You see, Mary Beth knits . . ." He interrupted himself. "Okay," he said to Butch, "you can let go of the tin."

Butch released the end of the sheet and it sprang free. "Did you change your mind?" he asked his father. "Are you going to make it short and big around instead?"

"No, I was just thinking about Nanny," the Professor replied. "She has all those cots to handle and she has to make up beds for all those guests, so, I was just thinking that she needs your help more than I do. Now that I have this sheet of tin out from behind the bench, I think I can probably manage the chimney-making alone. Okay?" he said, smiling hopefully.

"Are you chasing us out?" Prudence asked.

"Of course not. I just think that we ought to think about Nanny. She has a lot to do. My only project at the moment is to build a chimney which is practically nothing. But Nanny is probably running herself ragged upstairs."

"Nanny never runs herself ragged," Butch said. "She has plenty of time for everything."

"Nevertheless . . ."

"He's chasing us out," Prudence said to Butch.

"Not permanently," Professor Everett told them. "When I finish the chimney, I'm going to build a firebox. And when I start putting the two together, I'll call you back, so you can watch."

Resigned, Butch and Prudence left the basement

and walked up to the second floor, where they found Nanny getting clean sheets from the linen closet.

"Hello?" Nanny said, surprised. "Pollution under control already?"

"We got chased out," Butch reported.

"Oh? What for?"

"For helping," Prudence replied.

Nanny laughed. "I see. Well, you can pitch in and help me, then," she said. She pointed toward the far end of the hall. "There are the cots, all neatly stacked," she said. "You can begin assembling them, if you will."

"Hey, great!" Butch said. He headed for the stairs. "I'll get the hammer and be right back," he said, starting down.

"Butch!"

He halted.

Nanny was shaking her head. "No violence, please," she said. "The cots can be fitted together quite properly without the use of weapons."

Butch shrugged and returned. Then he and Prudence walked toward the end of the hallway, where the cots were waiting, while Nanny, carrying sheets, entered one of the bedrooms.

Reaching the cots, Butch and Prudence looked them up and down. Then Prudence inspected them from the right angle, while Butch surveyed them from the left. After a few seconds, they returned to the first position.

"It's easy," Butch said. "You get it so the legs are crossed and the flat part on top is flat. You just pull the legs apart, I think, and it all happens." He got hold of one of the cots by the lower end and backed away. The cot slid to the floor and lay still and flat. "Like that," Butch said to Prudence.

"The legs aren't crossed," she pointed out.

"That's easy," Butch said. "You get hold of that end and . . . you know . . . with the legs. And I'll do the same down here with these legs."

Prudence laughed. "*What* with the legs?"

Butch made wrestling motions. "Like that," he said.

Interested now, Prudence followed orders. She stood at one end of the cot and took hold of one leg with each hand. Butch, meanwhile, got into the same position at the other end of the cot. Then, laughing, they began wrestling with it, as if they were attempting to subdue some ferocious monster.

A few moments later, Nanny reappeared in the hallway. The wrestling stopped.

"What a nice tent," Nanny said, looking at the object that Butch and Prudence had managed to construct. "But when are we going to get some cots?"

"This one must be broken," Butch replied. "We put it together right, but it came out wrong. I don't know how it got that hump in the middle. It wasn't there when we started."

"Well," Nanny said, "unless we saw holes in the middle of our guests, I doubt that they'll get much sleep on these cots." She studied the matter a moment, then said, "I think I know how to handle it. I'll do your work for you and you can do mine for me." She handed the sheets to Butch. "Is that fair?"

He looked at the cot, then at the sheets. "Okay," he said, disappointed.

"The object is to get the work done," Nanny told him.

"I know it is," Butch replied. "I just hate to give up on the cots when we didn't even get a good start."

"I think you broke this one's back," Nanny said to him, indicating the cot with the hump in the middle.

"I guess sheets are better, at that," Butch replied, moving toward his father's bedroom. "Sheets don't have any bones in them."

Prudence followed Butch into the bedroom but not until she had watched Nanny assemble a cot. "She didn't have any trouble," she reported. "She just pushed and pulled and there it was, a cot."

"What fun is that?" Butch retorted. He dumped the pile of sheets on a chair, then took one from the top. "Here," he said, giving Prudence a corner of the sheet, "take this into the closet."

She stared at him.

"Just do it!"

Prudence began backing away, holding onto the corner of the sheet. When she reached the closet, she opened the door and entered. "It works!" she said, surprised. The sheet had become completely unfolded.

"I've opened sheets in here before," Butch said, with the nonchalance of a man of infinite experience. "Now, comes the hard part, though," he said. "We have to get it to stay on the bed."

Prudence emerged from the closet, still holding the corner of the sheet. "I don't even know how to get it on," she said.

"That's easy," Butch informed her. He got hold of two corners of the sheet, then, dragging the sheet behind him, jumped up onto the bed, waded across the mattress, then jumped down to the floor when he reached the other side. "See?" he said.

"Well . . . it's across the middle, anyway," Prudence admitted. "But how do you spread it around?"

"That's what I told you about, that's the hard part," Butch replied. He got a grip on the sheet again, then flapped it, trying to get it to cover more terri-

tory. Instead, though, it floated completely off the bed and ended up in a heap at his feet.

"That *is* hard," Prudence said, impressed. "Maybe you have to have a machine to do it. Or some kind of a thing with ropes."

Butch shook his head. "Nanny does it," he said. "She just goes Whsssssspt! and it's done. The whole sheet, it's all over the mattress."

"Oh, well, Nanny . . ." Prudence said. She frowned, thinking back. "Did we have sheets on the beds before Nanny came to live with us?"

At that moment, Nanny appeared in the doorway. "Problem?" she asked, smiling.

"It's okay, we're working on it," Butch said.

"Not very rapidly, though," Nanny said.

"We can't get the sheet on the bed," Prudence told her.

"Oh, that . . ." She laughed. "Try again."

"I'm not sure I can do a thing like that in public," he replied.

"In pub . . . oh, with me standing here watching you, you mean. Well, all right."

Nanny stepped out of sight into the hallway.

"Go ahead," Prudence said to Butch.

Looking determined, he flapped the sheet again. This time, almost as if by magic, the sheet flattened out, then settled gently to the mattress and stayed there.

Nanny appeared in the doorway once more. "Perfect!" she said. "I knew you could do it."

"I couldn't do it before," Butch said, looking at her suspiciously.

"Well, practice makes perfect, doesn't it?"

"I don't think so, not at my age," Butch replied. "Dad always says, at my age, if at first you don't suc-

ceed, forget it and wait till you get older or bigger or something."

"I know, dear," Nanny said, "but we really don't have time for . . ." She shook her head, looking annoyed at herself. "Why *don't* we have time?" she said. "Why, it's only just noon." She pointed to the bed. "That sheet," she said. "Isn't it slightly out of kilter there at the corner?"

"You mean here?" Butch replied, reaching toward the nearest corner of the mattress.

The instant Butch touched the sheet it sailed from the bed and landed in a heap at his feet.

Prudence burst out in laughter.

"Evidently you didn't get it on as securely as you thought," Nanny said to Butch.

He laughed, too. Then he snatched up a corner of the sheet and yanked on it and the sheet billowed and then began settling down on him like a parachute. Laughing hilariously, Butch scrambled out from under the sheet.

"Let me!" Prudence shouted. She jumped onto the bed and bounded across it and leaped to the floor. But while she was on her way, Butch had sent the sheet billowing into the air again, and, landing, she sank into a cloud of white fluffiness.

From under the sheet came the sound of Prudence's laughter. Then she appeared herself from under an edge.

Smiling, Nanny stepped from the room. When she reached the hallway, she saw Ferenci Vanalps starting up the stairs. She halted, looking at him questioningly.

"There you are," he said. "Is everything all right? Down here, it sounds like the upper floor is falling in."

Nanny laughed. "That's the children," she told him.

Ferenci Vanalps, who had stopped on the stairs,

looked puzzled. "Those *little* children?" he said. "Making all that racket? What are they doing?"

"Helping," Nanny answered.

Vanalps suddenly grinned. "Ah, yes," he said. "Fond recollections of childhood. I remember 'helping.'" He turned and, beginning to whistle, headed back toward the kitchen.

CHAPTER SIX

Without the help of the children, Nanny managed to get a great deal of work done in a short period of time. She set up cots all over the second floor. And she changed the linen in all of the bedrooms except the one in which Prudence and Butch were helping.

Finally, she returned to the room where the children were supposedly at work. Reaching there, she looked about for them. But they were nowhere in sight. She was about to call out. At that instant, however, she heard a voice from somewhere in the room. She cocked an ear and listened. The voice was coming from under the sheet that was piled up at the end of the bed on the floor. It was Butch talking. Nanny deduced from the conversation that Butch and Prudence were pretending to be exploring an underground cave. So, in the interests of science, she elected

not to disturb them. She imagined that if there was one thing they would resent it would be to be summoned from an exploration for lunch by a nanny. And with good reason!

When she reached the main floor, Nanny went directly to the kitchen. She found, not altogether to her surprise, that Ferenci Vanalps and the members of the German band were still there. The fact that they were still eating was even less of a surprise.

"I wonder when will I be able to get in here to prepare lunch?" Nanny asked, halting in the doorway.

The members of the German band got to their feet immediately. "*Hallo!*" they shouted. Then they sat down again and resumed eating.

"Don't worry about it," Ferenci Vanalps told her. "To tell you the truth, this snack is going to hold me for a while. I think I'll have a late lunch today."

"This may have escaped your notice," Nanny said, "but there are others of us here in the house. I refer, in particular, to Professor Everett and the three children."

"Two children," Vanalps said. "You can't count that one that stools for the cops. No kid would do that. He's a midget."

"I can't repair it here, I'll have to take it to the shop," the tuba player said to Nanny, reading from the phrase book.

"*Hallo* to you, too," she replied, smiling.

The members of the band jumped to their feet once more. "*Hallo!*" they shouted. Then, again, they sat down and continued eating.

Nanny sighed, a bit wearily, then turned and left the kitchen. When she reached the foyer, intending to go to the basement to take up the problem of the guests again with the Professor, she met the Professor himself arriving from there. He looked pleased.

"Did Butch and Prudence find you?" Professor Everett asked.

"Yes . . ."

He grinned. "Thanks for keeping them occupied," he said. "With them not helping me, I was able to get the job done. Wait'll you see it. Gorgeous. A firebox and a smokestack. Both handmade."

"Yes. Well, I've always said there's nothing more beautiful than a handmade chimney. But why did you leave them downstairs?" she asked. "I hope you don't intend to do your smoking down there."

"No, of course not," the Professor replied. "I'm just leaving it down there until I'm ready to use it. I'll take it out to the back yard when I'm ready to conduct the experiment." He looked in the direction of his office. "I'm just waiting for that chemical to jell." He looked at his watch. "I'll check it out again after lunch," he said.

"That may be later than you think," Nanny said.

"Pardon?"

"Mr. Vanalps and the German Band are occupying the kitchen," Nanny explained. "I was on my way to talk to you about it when you appeared from downstairs. Your policy of being hospitable really isn't working out too well. They are taking over."

"You're exaggerating," the Professor said.

"I'm not. At this rate, Mr. Vanalps and the Germans will soon begin looking upon us as the guests. And Mr. Vanalps will start dropping hints that we're outstaying our welcome."

"How can you say that?" the Professor replied. "They've been here only a couple hours."

"I've spotted the trend," Nanny said.

"Let's give it more of a chance," the Professor said. "Don't forget, those Germans have nowhere else to

go. What do you suggest—sending them out on the street?"

"No, certainly not," Nanny replied. "Actually, I suppose, it's Mr. Vanalps who's . . ." She broke in on herself. "Listen . . ." she said, turning her head slightly. "Do you hear . . ."

The sound of booming male laughter came from the direction of the kitchen.

"Sounds like fun," the Professor said, smiling. Then he frowned. "I hope they don't get too loud, though," he said. He looked toward his office again. "That chemical, at this stage, is extremely sensitive . . ."

The laughter was heard again. It was closer.

Nanny cringed. "They're coming this way," she said.

A moment later, Ferenci Vanalps and the Germans came trooping into the foyer. They were all laughing uproariously. They settled down somewhat, however, when they sighted Nanny and the Professor.

"I hope that joke that's causing all the hilarity isn't on us," Nanny said to Ferenci Vanalps.

"I wouldn't know," he replied. "I'm not even sure it's a joke we're laughing about. All I know is I said something to them in German and they began laughing. So, I joined them." He turned to Professor Everett. "I'm glad we found you," he said. "The boys and I have been talking this situation over and they've decided they want to do something to repay you for your hospitality."

"How do you know that if you can't understand each other?" Nanny asked.

Ferenci Vanalps looked at her blankly. "What do you mean, 'can't understand each other?'" he said. "We understand each other perfectly. We just don't know what we're saying to each other, that's all."

The tuba player seemed to agree with Ferenci. To Nanny, he said, "Have your tickets ready, please."

Nanny shrugged. "How can I argue with such eloquence?" she said. "I'm convinced."

"So am I," the Professor said to Ferenci Vanalps. "It isn't necessary, however, for the boys, as you call them, to repay me. We're happy to have them here. Tell them they're welcome to stay as long as . . ." He noticed the grim expression on Nanny's face. "Well, as long as necessary," he said. Then, to Nanny, he said, "I'm sure that something will be done soon about sending them home."

"I'll tell them that," Ferenci said to the Professor. "I'll tell them that you say that they're welcome and that they don't have to repay you and so and so and so and so."

"Careful with those so-and-sos," Nanny cautioned.

Ferenci nodded, then faced the Germans and addressed them in their native language—as he recalled it from his days in high school. The members of the band stared at him vacantly at first. As he talked on, a few of them began to giggle. But the tuba player, who had emerged as the leader, shushed them. After that, they listened to Ferenci Vanalps' speech with strict, though glassy-eyed, attention.

"I think that sums up pretty well what you said," Ferenci told the Professor. "Now, shall we have some lunch?"

The tuba player, however, was motioning to Ferenci.

"He probably wants to say something in reply," Ferenci told the Professor and Nanny. Then, speaking to the tuba player again, he said, "All right, you have five minutes. Just don't talk into the lunch hour."

Reading from his phrase book, the tuba player said, "The ski lift is broken."

"Succinctly put," Ferenci told him. "Now, lunch?"

The tuba player, however, was apparently not finished. He was paging through the phrase book, obviously looking for more to say.

"Are these formalities really necessary?" the Professor said, growing impatient.

"When in Osnabruck, do as the Osnabruckians do," Ferenci said.

"Where's that?"

"That's where this German band came from," Ferenci replied.

"We're not in Osnabruck," Nanny pointed out.

Ferenci waved the objection aside. "Technicality," he said.

The tuba player was ready to speak again. Smiling broadly and reading from the book, he said, "Check-out time is three o'clock. Guests who occupy rooms after that time will be charged for an extra day."

Ferenci, Nanny and the Professor looked at each other.

"Do you suppose he thinks this is a hotel?" Professor Everett said.

"A resort hotel," Nanny guessed. "He mentioned the ski lift, remember?"

Ferenci shook his head. "I doubt it," he said. "I don't imagine what he said just then has any more significance than anything he said before. Although . . ."

"He may even be telling us that he'll be leaving at three today," the Professor said.

"Let me try to get this straightened out," Ferenci said. "It's probably not possible but let me try, anyway."

Ferenci addressed the tuba player once more, using his high school German. There was some random snickering from the other members of the band at

first. The tuba player quickly silenced them, however, with a disapproving glare.

"I think they understand now," Ferenci said to Professor Everett and Nanny when he finished.

The tuba player replied. "Dim lights while driving through tunnel," he said, reading from the phrase book.

"No!" Ferenci said, annoyed. Then he began speaking to the tuba player in German again, sternly this time.

The tuba player suddenly broke into a wide smile. "*Ja!*" he said. "*Ja! Ja! Ja!*"

The other members of the band immediately joined him in the response, chanting, "*Ja! Ja! Ja!*"

"Evidently, I said something right," Ferenci reported to the Professor and Nanny. "'*Ja*,' as I recall, means 'yes.' So, whatever I said, they . . ."

The members of the band were removing their instruments from the cases. They seemed happy. They were discussing something in German with considerable enthusiasm.

"Do you know what I think . . ." Nanny said.

"I know what you think," Professor Everett nodded. "I think, in fact, that I'm thinking the same thing. They're going to play a concert, aren't they?"

"It looks very much like that."

A trumpet player blew several notes, tuning up.

"They're probably doing it to repay you for your hospitality," Ferenci said.

The tuba player had got his instrument from where he had left it, just inside the front doorway and had returned. He began blowing oompahs.

"How can we stop it?" Professor Everett said.

"Have them deported, that's the only way I can think of, offhand," Ferenci replied. "Let's just listen," he suggested. "They may be good."

Professor Everett laughed, shaking his head. "Yes, I suppose so," he said. "German band music isn't my favorite, but . . ." He suddenly looked horrified. "My experiment! My anti-pollution solution!" he said. "Band music will destroy it! It's so loud! And the chemical is so sensitive!"

"Yes, you must tell them not to play," Nanny said to Ferenci. "That experiment is very important."

"Naturally," Ferenci replied. "I'm sure they'll understand. Germans are very big on science."

From the tuba came an oompah that made the whole house tremble.

"Hurry! Tell them!" the Professor said to Ferenci.

Ferenci raised a hand, getting the tuba player's attention. Then, using his high school German, he explained to him that there was a possibility that the playing might destroy the Professor's experiment.

"*Ja!*" the tuba player replied when Ferenci had concluded the explanation.

"I'm improving," Ferenci told the Professor and Nanny.

An instant later he was nearly knocked off his feet by a blast from the band. The Germans had begun playing, led by the tuba player.

Professor Everett waved his arms wildly. "No, stop!" he pleaded.

The Germans all waved back, looking pleased, while continuing to play. The sound was deafening.

Again, Professor Everett waved. "My experiment!" he shouted. "You're ruining it!"

The members of the band returned the wave and played even louder, thinking that the Professor was urging them on.

"You're making it worse," Ferenci told him.

"I've got to save that experiment!" the Professor said. "Maybe if I can wrap it in something or . . ."

He went racing from the foyer, headed for his office.

The tuba player signaled to the other members of the band, and the Germans, still playing, trooped after the Professor.

"He shouldn't have done all that waving," Ferenci said to Nanny. "They think he wanted them to follow him." He looked in the direction the band was going. "It must be a marching band," he observed. "They certainly know how to march, don't they?"

"Poor Professor Everett," Nanny said.

"It's probably too late," Ferenci said, "but, even so, I suppose I ought to try to stop them."

Ferenci and Nanny followed the band, moving toward the Professor's office. When they reached it, they could hardly get inside. The band, still playing, had crowded into the office.

"Professor!" Nanny called.

"I think I hear somebody whimpering," Ferenci said.

"Nonsense," she replied. "It's impossible to hear anything over the sound of this so-called music!"

"What? I can't hear you!"

"I said . . . nevermind what I said!"

"What? That band is making too much noise!"

Nanny did not respond. Instead, she began making her way between the band members, moving in the direction of the Professor's desk. When she reached it, she found him there. He had his fingers inside the beaker. And it was obvious from the expression on his face that the experiment had aborted.

"Watery?" Nanny shouted.

Professor Everett took his fingers from the beaker. Colorless chemical dripped from them.

"Well, it isn't jello-like," Nanny said.

Ferenci arrived. He watched the liquid drip from the Professor's fingertips. "It's just as well," he said. "Now, you can devote full time to politics. You'll make a great President. Look at how good you are at foreign relations. These Germans love you."

"Will you get them out of here!" Professor Everett begged. "I've got to start all over again on this experiment!"

Ferenci looked at the tuba player, who was nearby. The tuba player was puffing away jubilantly and perspiring profusely. He was clearly enjoying himself. "I'll try to move them," Ferenci said to the Professor. "But I won't guarantee the result."

Shouting, Ferenci addressed the tuba player in high school German. Continuing to play, the tuba player nodded that he understood. The band did not move, however. Nor did it stop playing.

"We'll have to move out of the house to get away from them," the Professor said drearily.

Ferenci made another effort. Shouting in high school German again, he pointed to the beaker of chemical at the same time, telling the tuba player that the Professor wanted quiet so that he could attempt once again to make an anti-pollution solution.

The tuba player stopped playing. The other members of the band, however, continued.

"I've got it," Ferenci said to the Professor and Nanny. "The only thing is, I think I'm going to have to do it one instrument at a time."

"You haven't got it," Nanny told him. She pointed to the tuba player.

Having first wiped perspiration from his brow, the tuba player had now picked up the beaker of chemical from Professor Everett's desk.

"I think . . ." Ferenci began.

He was right. The tuba player, utilizing the beaker of anti-pollution solution, which now looked like water, was quenching his thirst.

"Will it hurt him?" Nanny said to the Professor, fearful.

Professor Everett, defeated, shook his head. "No," he replied. "If anything, it will help him. He'll never have to worry about becoming polluted."

The tuba player spoke to the Professor. "Violators will be prosecuted!" he said.

"He's thanking you for the drink," Ferenci explained to the Professor.

"You're welcome," Professor Everett said to the tuba player.

The tuba player grinned widely in response, then resumed playing.

"I told you I couldn't guarantee the result," Ferenci said to Professor Everett. "I'll try again, though."

The Professor nodded dimly. "Please do."

Pointing toward the office doorway, Ferenci shouted at the tuba player again, using his high school German once more. This time, the result was better. The tuba player nodded his head, and his tuba, then moved toward the doorway.

"They're going!" Ferenci said, surprised, as the other band members began following the tuba player from the Professor's office.

"But going where, I wonder," Nanny said, looking worried. "They're still playing and still marching. Who knows where they might be heading? You don't," she said to Ferenci. "You haven't the slightest idea what you said to them."

"We better try to head them off," Ferenci said, hurrying after the band. "Is there a pass anywhere in this house? That'll be the best place to do it."

Nanny trailed after him, leaving Professor Everett staring woefully at the empty beaker.

When Nanny and Ferenci reached the foyer, they saw the band members marching single-file up the stairs. They got in line and made their way up the steps behind the last man in line, the drummer.

"I must know how to say 'take the band upstairs' in German!" Ferenci shouted to Nanny. "That's pretty good for a drop-out!"

"Watch where you're going!" Nanny shouted back, pointing.

They had reached the top of the stairs. While the band had turned right, Ferenci, involved in shouting to Nanny, had gone straight. Now, he turned and trailed the drummer into one of the bedrooms. As he and Nanny and the drummer were entering, they met the tuba player, who was leading the rest of the band in exiting.

Ferenci bellowed to the tuba player in high school German.

The tuba player interrupted an oompah at oom. He bellowed, "Press button for elevator!" in response. Then he completed the oompah with the pah and marched from sight.

"Nanny!" a small voice called.

From a corner of the room, Butch and Prudence were waving.

Ferenci and Nanny halted, and Butch and Prudence ran to them, as the last member of the German band, the drummer, disappeared from view.

"That was scary!" Prudence said.

"We were down in this deep, dark underground cave looking for Martians," Butch explained, "and all of a sudden this German band came marching in!"

"Cave? Martians?" Ferenci said.

"Helping," Nanny explained.

He brightened, understanding. "Oh, yes, helping . . ." he said. "But, if you were looking for Martians in a deep, dark underground cave, I don't see why a German band would frighten you," he went on.

"That's perfectly logical," Nanny said. "The Martians were imaginary but those Germans are more real than real."

From the hallway came a crunching sound.

"The cots!" Nanny cried. She ran toward the doorway.

The cots, she and the others found, had been crunched to rags and splinters by the German band. The band, then, had marched on into one of the other bedrooms. The music was still as loud as ever. And the house continued to tremble from the sound.

"These," Nanny said, pointing to the sticks that had once been the legs of cots, "are the very, very, *very* last straws. One of us," she told Ferenci, "is going to have to do something. And if I'm the one who has to do it, I'm sorry but I wouldn't be surprised if it resulted in an international incident!"

"Once more!" Ferenci said. "I'll try once more!"

"You better use something other than your high school German!"

"Yes. I'll try . . . well, I'll think of something," he said. "I'll try . . ."

The German band, with the tuba player still leading, emerged from a bedroom and headed straight for the spot where Ferenci, Nanny and the children were standing.

"I will not be trampled!" Nanny warned, eyeing the Germans fiercely.

Ferenci suddenly dashed toward them. "Lunch!" he

shouted, waving his arms frantically. "Lunch! Food! *Nahrung!*"

The tuba player nodded, still playing.

Ferenci dashed to the stairway, motioning for the band members to follow. "Food!" he shouted again. "All you can eat!"

The tuba player turned the march toward the stairs.

"I did it again!" Ferenci cried. And at the same time he threw up his hands and lost his balance and went crashing down the steps.

Nanny ran toward the head of the stairs. But she was not fast enough. The band got there first and, blaring away, started down, obscuring the view of the first floor.

"Are you all right?" Nanny called out.

"I can't hear you!" Ferenci shouted from the bottom of the steps. "But don't stop me now! I've got them headed for the kitchen!"

Nanny turned to Butch and Prudence, who had tagged after her. "He's all right," she advised them.

"We better find a place to hide again," Prudence said. "They might be back."

Nanny looked down the stairs. She could still hear the band but it was nowhere in sight. "Perhaps we can trap it somewhere," she said, starting down the steps and signalling to Butch and Prudence to follow.

When they were halfway down the stairs, the band music abruptly stopped. They halted and listened. The music did not resume, however, the house was suddenly absolutely still.

"I'll bet the Martians zapped them," Prudence said, whispering.

"I don't really think we can count on that," Nanny replied. She proceeded down the steps. "Let's see if we can find out—"

The doorbell rang.

"Coming!" Nanny called.

Just as Nanny and the children reached the main floor, Professor Everett emerged from the hallway that led to his office. He still looked somewhat stunned.

"I'm not hearing things," he said. "What happened?"

"Well, I'm not sure. We were . . ."

The doorbell rang again.

"Let me get that," Nanny said. She went to the door and opened it and found Ferenci Vanalps outside. "How did you . . ."

Ferenci quickly slipped inside, then pushed the door closed. "Is it safe?" he asked.

The others stared at him bafflingly.

He smiled. "Evidently it is," he said. He listened for a second. "I don't hear them. I left them in the kitchen," he explained. "I ran in there and grabbed that leftover ham from the refrigerator and threw it in their path and then ran out the back door."

"I see and around the house," Nanny said.

"Right. That was me at the door, ringing the bell," Ferenci said.

"Well, that seems to explain that," Nanny said. "The band is apparently having lunch. It accounts for the silence. One simply cannot eat and tootle on the tuba at the same time."

"What will we do when they finish lunch?" Professor Everett asked. "I can't possibly work with that booming and blaring going on. Even if I *could* concentrate, it wouldn't do any good. You saw what happened to that first experiment."

"I don't think they'll play again, unless they're turned on," Ferenci said. "If I can manage to keep from saying anything to them in German, they'll probably be as quiet as mice. Basically, they're nice

fellows. They just have a little trouble with their language, that's all."

Professor Everett looked at him, started to speak to him, then changed his mind. He turned to Nanny. "I'm going back to work," he said. "I have to start from the beginning on that chemical. Please. Try to keep the noise down."

She nodded sympathetically.

"Why don't you put cotton in your ears, Daddy?" Prudence asked.

"From the mouths of babes, eh?" Ferenci said to the Professor.

He shook his head. "No, not from the mouths of babes," he replied. "It isn't me that the noise bothers, it's the chemical it bothers."

"Oh, yes."

Professor Everett raised a hand in a weak salute. "Peace," he said, departing.

The doorbell rang.

Professor Everett halted.

"It's not me," Ferenci Vanalps said defensively.

Nanny went to the door and opened it. Hal and the two policemen, the older and the younger, were there. Hal looked slightly troubled. The policemen, surprisingly, however, were both smiling happily.

"Mr. Everett," the older policeman said.

"Professor Everett, do you mean?" Nanny asked.

"That's the one," the policeman replied, sounding completely delighted.

Professor Everett arrived at the doorway. "Hal, is everything all right?" he asked. "You haven't done anything wrong, have you?"

"Oh, no. No, sir, not one thing has he done wrong, this time," the older policeman said. "He's a fine boy. A *fine* boy!"

"Then what is it?" Professor Everett asked.

"If you'll hold out your hand, sir," the older policeman said.

The Professor extended a hand.

The policeman placed a folded paper in it.

"What is it?" Professor Everett asked.

"A summons!" the policeman announced, grinning joyfully.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Professor Everett, having just been handed a summons by the older policeman, turned it over and over, as if expecting it to either disappear or speak up and explain itself.

"For what?" the Professor finally said, addressing the policeman.

"Just a minute," Ferenci said, stepping forward. "As your campaign manager, I advise you not to ask that question. If you don't know what you're getting the summons for, we can always claim later that it got lost before you had a chance to read it."

"I'm not running for anything," Professor Everett told him. He opened the paper that the policeman had given him and looked at it, then, shaking his head, said, "This doesn't help. Where it says what I did, there's nothing but a number."

"That's the number of the ordinance," Hal explained. "If you want to know what the charge is, it's for disturbing the peace. You were playing the radio too loud."

"I see," Professor Everett said, nodding knowingly. He spoke to the older policeman. "You're doing this, I assume," he said, "in an effort to get me to call off my son." He shook his head, looking grim. "It won't work," he said. "I'm behind Hal one-hundred per cent. You can hit me with all the phony charges you want to, but I won't back down. Hal is right in what he's doing. I'll stick with him to the bitter end."

The policeman chuckled. "Good for you, sir," he said.

"Dad," Hal said, "it wasn't his idea to give you the summons. I'm the one who made the complaint about you disturbing the peace. I had to. It wouldn't be right for me to point out the law-breaking that everyone else is doing and then to ignore it when my own father was doing it, would it?"

"No, of course not," Professor Everett replied, puzzled. "But," he held up the summons, "I haven't been disturbing the peace."

"You're father is right, Hal," Nanny said. "We haven't had a radio on in the house since early morning."

The older policeman addressed Hal. "That's what they all say," he told him. "You ought to hear some of the stories I get."

"We heard it," Hal said to Nanny. "It was coming from our house, all right. The volume must have been turned up as high as it would go, too. I had to hold my hands over my ears."

Nanny shook her head. "Not from this house," she said. "Besides, how could you possibly have heard a

radio playing, with all that band music blaring through the . . . oh . . ."

Professor Everett laughed. "There's been a mistake," he said. He handed the summons toward the policeman. "That wasn't a radio. That was a real band. We have . . . well, they're guests. A German band. And . . . Aren't you going to take this summons back?"

"I am not," the policeman replied. "The summons is for disturbing the peace. And whether you use the radio to do it or a live band, it's still disturbing the peace." He turned to Hal. "Am I correct?"

Hal nodded. "That's the law," he said.

"But it's not your father's fault," Nanny said. "He didn't turn the band on. And his peace is the one that's been disturbed the most. All that racket ruined his lovely experiment."

Hal looked downward. "I'm getting sorrier and sorrier that I started this," he said. "I didn't know it would start my own family lying about things."

Nanny looked at the Professor and the Professor looked at Nanny. They shrugged.

Then Nanny spoke to Hal again. "Dear, what is it you think we're lying about?" she asked.

He raised his eyes. "Why couldn't you just admit that you had the radio on too loud," he said. "I mean, I've lived in the house long enough to know that there isn't any German band in there."

"The public will tell you anything," the older policeman advised him. "You got to harden yourself to it. You got to figure, no matter what they say, it's a lie."

"But we *do* have a German band!" the Professor said indignantly. "Not only . . . All right," he said, "I'll prove it." He motioned to his son. "Hal, come

with me." Then he turned and walked in the direction of the kitchen.

Hal looked at Nanny, then followed his father.

"It's stranded," Nanny said to the older policeman when Professor Everett and Hal had gone. "We're sort of taking care of it until . . . well, until somebody rescues it, I suppose."

"I'll say one thing for your story, it's different," the policeman replied. "Mostly, the public don't have no imagination. Over a normal day, I'd say, stopping speeders from going through traffic lights, I get about fifty per cent 'I'm rushing my wife to the hospital,' about twenty-five per cent 'it changed to red when I was in the middle of the intersection' and another twenty-four per cent 'I'm an undercover agent for the F.B.I.'."

"That's only ninety-nine per cent," Ferenci pointed out.

"One per cent claims to have German bands," the officer replied.

At that moment, Hal and the Professor returned. Hal was grinning.

"It's really a German band!" Hal said to the older policeman. "I saw it. It has uniforms and a tuba and everything."

"That's a good boy, stay loyal to your father in spite of all," the policeman replied, smiling at Hal approvingly. "I'd want my own boy to do the same thing. Nevertheless, though," he added, "he still gets the summons."

"Yes, we straightened that out," Professor Everett said. "I'm accepting the summons. I'll explain the extenuating circumstances to the judge when I get to court."

The older policeman chuckled again. "Oh, the judge'll love that one—a German band," he said.

"I'm ready to get back to work," Hal said to the policeman.

"You're kidding," the policeman replied. "After what's just happened? Can't you see, yet, what extremist law enforcement leads to? You made me give a summons to your own father! *Your own father!*"

Hal nodded, umimpressed.

"Maybe you don't understand all the significance of it," the policeman said. "Put yourself in somebody else's shoes. Suppose you were *my* son! And you handed your own father a summons! Can't you see the terrible tragedy of a thing like that?"

"But if you were breaking the law . . ."

"Stop!" the policeman said. "I won't listen. You talk about the law! I say the law can go . . ."

The younger policeman was tugging at his sleeve.

"What is it?" the older policeman replied gruffly.

The younger policeman motioned. Then the two stepped to one side and began a whispered conversation.

"Are you finding a lot of violations?" Professor Everett said to Hal.

"Plenty," Hal replied. "Especially since I discovered a law that was passed in 1903 that says no house can be more than one story high. Almost all the houses in the neighborhood are at least two stories high. I'll be back later to give you a summons for our house for being too tall. We're doing it house by house and I probably won't get to this block until sometime this afternoon."

"Who in heavens pushed through a law to keep houses so low?" Nanny asked.

"The Wright brothers," Hal replied.

"Oh. Well, at the time, I suppose that made sense."

The two policemen returned.

The older policeman patted Hal on the head. "Yes, it's just like the Commissioner said in a speech last week," he told him, "what we need is more boys like you, boys that hold up the law instead of tearing it down." He closed his eyes and shuddered, then said, "As you were saying . . . time to get back to work . . ."

Hal and the two policemen departed.

"There's our angle," Ferenci said, watching them go.

The Professor, Nanny, Prudence and Butch looked at him questioningly.

"It's what we need to make your name a household word," Ferenci said to the Professor. "The police are persecuting you. They're picking on you because . . ." He frowned, looking thoughtful, then shrugged. "We'll figure out why they're persecuting you later," he said. "The only important thing is that they are *and* that they're using your own son to do it! Can't you just see the headline, *Dirty Rotten Capitalist Cops Use Father's Own Son to Persecute and Harass Him For Reasons Unknown!*"

"Where will you find a newspaper wide enough to print it?" Nanny asked.

"Even if you found the newspaper, what would you accomplish by printing it?" the Professor asked.

"You'd become a martyr," Ferenci told him. "Every parent in the country would be on your side, no matter what you stood for. I ask you, do the parents of this nation want the dirty rotten capitalist cops using their own sons and daughters against them? The answer is obvious. Of course they don't."

"That is not what is happening, though," Professor Everett said. "The problem, I think, is that you don't understand what's going on. Now, this morning at

breakfast, we were talking about what we intended to do this summer. It seemed to me . . ."

"Please," Ferenci broke in. He had a hand on his brow. "Don't distract me with details. I'm interested only in facts. The fact is that those two cops are using your son to persecute and harass you."

"Hal is persecuting and harassing the whole neighborhood," Nanny pointed out.

"That's a detail," Ferenci replied. "I told you, I'm not interested in details. If you're going to be my assistant campaign manager, you'll have to learn to distinguish between facts and details."

"Here's a fact for you," Professor Everett said. "I have no intention of entering politics. So, I won't need a campaign manager."

"You said that before," Ferenci told him.

"So?"

"So, you're allowed two more denials," Ferenci replied. "After that, though, no more nonsense. You'll have to submit to the will of the people and enter the race. That means that, in the meantime, we'll have to hustle to plan your campaign. You wouldn't want your own organization to be taken by surprise when you change your mind and decide to run, would you?"

Professor Everett turned to Nanny. "You found him," he said. "You explain it to him. I have to get back to work." He left, headed for his office.

"How's this for a campaign slogan, *Everett For Everybody!*" Ferenci called after him.

The Professor did not reply.

"*Everybody For Everett?*" Ferenci shouted.

The Professor disappeared down the hallway.

"He's right, it needs a little working on," Ferenci admitted.

"You're wasting your time," Nanny told him. "If the Professor says he isn't interested, he simply isn't interested."

"He'll change his mind," Ferenci replied. "His problem is that he doesn't realize that the police really are persecuting and harassing him. Wait'll they come back to give him another summons for the same violation. *Twice* in less than one hour! Is that persecution? Is that harassment?"

"I don't believe I under . . ."

"I'm going to turn the band on again," Ferenci explained. "I ask you, will that get the cops back? They'll be pounding on the door again before that tuba player can even get up a good second wind."

"They don't pound. They ring the bell."

"Detail. When we talk to the newspaper reporters, we'll use the word 'pound.' Try to remember that."

"What newspaper reporters?" Nanny inquired.

"If we're lucky," Ferenci replied, "they won't even bother to give him a second summons. They'll haul him right off to jail. You know how the cops are once they start persecuting somebody." He looked around. "Is there a phone in here? I better alert the papers to the fact that the cops will be dragging the Professor in to the jail very shortly."

"You're getting just a bit ahead of yourself," Nanny told him. "I know how you'd enjoy the whole business, Mr. Vanalps, but I'm sorry, I just can't allow you to interfere in the Professor's life at the moment. You see, he's very set on developing this anti-pollution solution. And he couldn't do it if he were in jail, could he? I doubt that they'd allow him to have the chemicals and instruments that he'd need. Therefore," she said, smiling sympathetically, "I'm afraid you're going to have to put off sending him to the cooler until a better time."

"Woman, you don't know what you're saying," Ferenci replied. "This is destiny. There's nothing anyone can do about it. It's bigger than all of us!" He strode in the direction of the kitchen. "Just let me get that band going again," he said. "You'll see, it'll all happen just as I've said it will. I know destiny when I see it."

Nanny sighed resignedly, then followed him. Butch and Prudence, fascinated, trailed after her.

"Nanny, what's a household word?" Butch asked.

"Pardon?"

"What's a household word? Mr. Vanalps said Dad's name would become a household word."

"Oh. Well, a household word is a word that's known to everyone in the household. Understand? It's something that's very well known. Everyone's heard about it."

"Like what?" Prudence asked.

"Oh, my, let's see, like Coca-Cola, I imagine."

Both children were silent for a moment.

Then Prudence said, "Will we have to change our names to Coca-Cola, too, when Daddy does?"

"There'll be no name-changing," Nanny assured her, leading the way into the kitchen.

Ferenci Vanalps had managed to get the attention of the members of the German band, who were occupying most of the space in the kitchen. He was about to begin telling them what he wanted when Nanny and the children arrived.

"I really can't let you do this," Nanny warned.

"I'm at the mercy of fate," he told her. "The people are crying out for a man like the Professor to lead them. Whether they know it or not now, he's the kind they need."

"What kind?" Prudence asked, interested.

"The kind I can control," Ferenci replied.

"You're wrong about that, too, if you think you could control Professor Everett," Nanny said. "However . . ."

Ferenci raised a hand, interrupting. "Seeing is believing," he said. "Just watch. And it might be a good idea to put your fingers in your ears. In about a half-a-second, I'm going to have them going at full blast again." Once more, he faced the musicians.

"Watch out for falling rocks," the tuba player said, smiling genially.

"I'm glad you said that," Ferenci told him. "It proves that you agree with me. When destiny commands, all we mere mortals can do is obey. Now, are you ready? I'm going to hit you with some more German. So far, your record for understanding it is only about fifty-fifty. But I'm sure that if you really concentrate you can do a lot better. Now, listen closely."

Ferenci began addressing the tuba player in high school German. As he spoke, Nanny's eyes narrowed, and she stared directly at his lips. The result was near to miraculous. Ferenci spoke distinctly and without hesitating a bit. And the tuba player, looking amazed, seemed to understand perfectly every word Ferenci said.

"Are you sure you've got that?" Ferenci said, switching back to English.

"*Ja!*" the tuba player replied.

Ferenci beamed. To Nanny, he said, "Did you hear that? Not only did he understand what I said in German, he also understood what I said in English when I asked him if he understood what I said in German!"

"It's astounding, all right," she agreed, looking amused.

"I thought they were going to play again," Butch said. "Why are they putting their horns away."

The members of the band, the others saw, were placing their instruments in the cases.

"What happened?" Ferenci said, stunned.

"Perhaps destiny goofed," Nanny suggested.

Ferenci shouted at the tuba player. "I want you to play!" he said. "Play music! March! Big bang!"

The tuba player nodded agreeably. He consulted his phrase book, then replied, "Ring bell for service."

"Why did you tell me you understood what I said to you in German when I asked you if you understood what I said to you in German in English if you didn't understand what I said to you in German?" Ferenci demanded irately.

The tuba player stared at him for a moment, baffled. Then he looked at Nanny, as if seeking an explanation for Ferenci's rage.

"Keep off the grass," she told him.

He beamed. "Don't feed the animals," he replied, no longer puzzled by Ferenci's anger.

"I know this is a dirty capitalist plot," Ferenci said crankily to Nanny, "but what I can't figure out is when you and the tuba player got together to plot it."

The members of the band, with the tuba player in the lead once more, were leaving the kitchen, taking their instruments and cases with them.

"Maybe not all is lost," Ferenci said, hurrying after them. "Maybe they're just moving to a better location, some place with more open doors and windows."

Still looking amused, Nanny signaled to Butch and Prudence. They all trailed after Ferenci Vanalps. When they caught up with him, he was standing in the foyer, looking up the stairs. The members of the band were climbing the steps to the second floor.

"What they're going to do, I think, is play from the roof," Ferenci said. Then he hustled after them.

"Are we going, too?" Butch asked Nanny.

She shook her head. "No need to," she replied. "He'll be back in a short time."

"I'd like to go," Prudence said. "I've never been to the roof."

"They're not going to the roof, dear," Nanny told her. "They're going upstairs for a nap, that's all. They had a heavy meal and they did all that strenuous marching, so they need to rest for a spell."

"Are you sure?" Butch replied. "How do you know?"

"It simply makes sense," Nanny answered. "What would you do if you'd just had a big meal and you'd been tramping all 'round, tootling on those horns?"

"I'd go up on the roof," Butch replied, sounding hopeful.

"The answer is no. The roof is a dangerous—Oh . . . here comes Mr. Vanalps, now."

Looking perplexed, Ferenci Vanalps had appeared at the head of the stairs. Slowly, scowling to himself, he began descending. When he became aware of Nanny and the children at the bottom of the steps, he halted.

"They're snoring like babies," Ferenci said dimly.

"Sleeping like babies, I believe you mean," Nanny said.

"Right! I don't believe it. We got to the second floor and they made for all the open doorways. They're piled up on the beds. Snoring like babies!"

"Heaven only knows when they last had sleep," Nanny said.

"But where did they get the idea? And how did they know where to go?" Ferenci Vanalps said. "I didn't tell them to go upstairs and take a nap."

"Are you positive?" Nanny asked.

"Of course I'm . . ." He looked suddenly doubtful. "Well, I'm not ten-thousand per cent positive."

"And remember, they've been having trouble with their language from the first moment they met you," he said. "So, it's possible that, no matter what you said, they *thought* you told them to go upstairs and have a nap for themselves."

"That could explain it, I suppose," Ferenci nodded. He was obviously not very happy about the idea, however.

"Pity . . . but apparently you'll have to delay your plan to get Professor Everett persecuted by the police," Nanny said.

"This is a temporary setback," Ferenci agreed.

"I'm rather glad," Nanny said. "It will give me an opportunity to pick up the kitchen. And, I better begin thinking about dinner, too. We have quite a houseful of mouths to feed."

"Do you want us to help?" Prudence asked Nanny. "It's what we're doing today, anyway, helping."

"Instead, why don't you keep Mr. Vanalps company," Nanny suggested. "He might think of some bright, shiny new adventure to engage in. And, if he does, perhaps you'll run and tell me about it. I wouldn't want to miss out on anything exciting."

"You want us to spy on him, you mean?" Butch asked.

"Exactly," Nanny replied.

"Fascist nanny!" Ferenci said bitterly.

Nanny laughed, then left for the kitchen.

"There's something sinister about her," Ferenci Vanalps said to the children, sitting down on a step on the stairs. Then, lowering his voice, he said, "What's her background? Where did she come from? How long have you known her? Does she ever disappear for

hours at a time and refuse to say where she's been?" Then, speaking normally once more, he said, "No, don't tell me. If she's an undercover agent, I don't want to know about it. Why spoil a pleasant relationship?"

"She isn't an undercover agent, anyway," Butch told him.

"She's just an ordinary superior human being," Prudence said. "That's what I heard Daddy say one day. It was after something happened the way she said it would even though it couldn't."

"I don't doubt it," Ferenci said glumly.

"Everything always turns out the way Nanny wants it," Butch said.

Ferenci looked at him interestedly. "Everything? Always?"

Butch and Prudence both nodded.

"Has she ever explained it?" Ferenci asked.

"She says she has a knack," Butch replied.

"A knack!" Ferenci snorted. "I'll say she has a . . ." He frowned again. "You know, we were at a candy factory this morning, trying to get something done about pollution and we were getting absolutely nowhere and . . . well, a pump suddenly went into reverse and started pumping all the pollution right back at the people who were doing the polluting." He shook his head. "But she wasn't anywhere near that pump. And, anyway, she explained it. The machinery simply malfunctioned. There's nothing unusual about that."

"According to what Nanny says, nothing unusual *ever* happens," Butch told him.

"Yes, I know what you mean. I was in the kitchen, starting to slice some meat for a pre-lunch snack and I couldn't get the knife to work correctly. I wanted to

cut thick slices but the knife would only cut thin slices. I saw, the way she was looking at me, that she didn't want me to cut those slices thick." He lowered his voice again. "She hexed me," he said. "How else do you explain it?"

"Maybe you slice the same way you speak German," Butch suggested.

"That's what *she* said!" Ferenci snapped. "She's brainwashed you!"

"What's 'hexed?' " Prudence asked.

"Magic," Ferenci said.

Prudence giggled.

"What's so funny?"

"If you think Nanny hexed you, you must think she does magic," Prudence replied.

"When things happen just exactly the way one person wants them to happen, something ver-ry strange is going on," Ferenci said. "Call it magic, call it witchcraft, call it anything you like, but you certainly have to admit that it isn't normal. Am I right?"

Butch and Prudence frowned, thinking.

"Why did those Germans trot upstairs and commandeer all the beds and drop off to sleep like trained seals?" he asked. "Was that *normal?* Was it because they misunderstood what I told them? Was it . . ." He looked annoyed. "Well, I suppose it's *possible* that it was because they misunderstood what I told them," he said.

"If Nanny is magic, why doesn't she ever pull a rabbit out of a hat?" Prudence asked.

"That's a point," Ferenci admitted. "Magicians can never resist that trick." He sighed. "Oh, well, I suppose you're right. Even if I could prove it, I couldn't get anybody else to believe it. Nobody believes in magic these days. Everything is scientific. Electronics

this, electronics that. You'd think . . ." He interrupted himself and his expression suddenly changed. He looked as if he had been visited by inspiration.

Butch whispered to Prudence. "I think he was right," he said. "I guess Nanny *did* hex him."

"No, no, I'm all right," Ferenci assured him, smiling, looking increasingly pleased. "I think I've figured . . ." He lowered his voice again. "Do you know what this is?" he said. "This is the age of science. And what is your father?"

"A scientist," Butch replied.

"Very good. You're a clever little boy. Now, let's suppose that your father, a scientist, wanted a servant around that would function at the highest possible level of efficiency. What would he do?"

"He always called the employment agency before," Butch said.

"You don't understand what I'm getting at," Ferenci told him. "I'm talking about the perfect servant."

"That's what we got from the employment agency," Butch insisted. "What a bunch of clunks. What we really needed, instead, was a Nanny."

"Oh. Yes, well . . . Of course!" Ferenci said. "That fits in perfectly with what I was thinking. Unable to get what he wanted from the usual sources, your father, a *scientist* remember, did what?"

"He got disgusted," Prudence said.

"Naturally," Ferenci said wearily. "Let me put it another way. This . . . uh, this person you refer to as Nanny . . . have you ever, by any chance, heard it ticking?"

"Sometimes around the left wrist," Prudence said.

"Around the wristwatch area, you mean." Ferenci shook his head. "That's not quite what I had in mind. Let's try again. This Nanny, does it ever clank? Have you ever seen a little metal door pop open acciden-

tally? Do sparks ever fly from it? Does it ever say anything about a need to have its batteries recharged? Any little hint at all like that?"

"You make Nanny sound like some kind of a robot or something," Butch said.

"*You said it!*" Ferenci responded, delighted. "The same notion has occurred to you, too, hasn't it? And why not? It's a completely logical conclusion. Your father is a scientist. He was unhappy with the housekeepers he was getting from the employment agencies. So, he put his mind to the problem and then designed and built the perfect servant—a robot nanny!"

Butch and Prudence peered at him vacantly.

"Maybe you're right," Ferenci said, disappointed. "I suppose magic does make a lot more sense." He rose from the seat on the step. "The only way to find out for sure which it is, magic or science, is to conduct an investigation," he said, moving down the stairs. "She went to the kitchen, didn't she?"

"Yes, sir, the kitchen," Butch replied, as Ferenci passed them.

"I'll let you know how the investigation turns out," Ferenci promised.

"Do you think he really thinks what he says he thinks?" Prudence asked, when Ferenci had gone.

Butch shook his head. "I think he's just hungry again," he said.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Nanny had just finished the clean-up when Ferenci entered the kitchen. She smiled fleetingly, in recognition of his arrival, then got a small pad and a pencil from the counter and sat down at the table, looking thoughtful.

"How did you do that so fast?" Ferenci asked suspiciously. "You haven't been in here more than ten minutes. Before, this place looked as if a German band had been having lunch in it. Now, it looks as if it had just stepped off the page of a magazine. That's impossible."

"To quote a very, very wise man, nothing is impossible if one knows how," Nanny replied.

"Who said that?"

"I haven't the foggiest," she responded. "But he

must have been very, very wise if he said it, because it's true."

Ferenci nodded. "You haven't answered my question, though," he said. "How did you do it? This place was a shambles a short time ago. Now, it's all in order. No ordinary human being could possibly have straightened it up that quickly."

Nanny had been making notes on the pad. Now, she looked up. "I've never claimed to be ordinary," she said. "In fact, there are no ordinary people, really. Each of us is special in his own small way, don't you think?"

"You're not answering my question," Ferenci charged.

"Question? Oh. Let's see, now, the question was . . . What *was* the question?"

Eyes narrowing, Ferenci moved closer. "How did you get the kitchen cleaned up so fast?"

"Why, I hurried," Nanny replied. "There's a sort of rule-of-thumb I follow: if I want to get something done quickly, I hurry; if I don't care how long it takes to get it done, I *don't* hurry. It's a marvelous rule. Works nearly every time."

Ferenci realized that he was not going to learn anything by asking direct questions. He decided to alter his method of interrogation. First, he changed his facial expression, looking at Nanny pleasantly rather than accusingly. Then he joined her at the table, leaning back in a chair in a lazy, disinterested way. Unfortunately, he relaxed and leaned back a bit too much. The chair tipped over backwards, landing him on his back on the kitchen floor.

"Not hurt, I hope," Nanny said, as Ferenci picked up himself and the chair.

"Not hurt," he replied, reseating himself, looking

mildly disconcerted. He leaned forward, this time, instead of backwards. Then his manner became casual again. "It's almost like magic," he said.

"What is?" Nanny asked, writing again.

"The way you cleaned up the kitchen so quickly."

"You wouldn't have thought it was magic if you'd been doing the work," Nanny replied.

"Mmmmmmmmmm." He was silent for several moments. Then, in the same offhand way, he asked, "About time to have your batteries recharged, isn't it?"

Nanny looked up. "You appear to be looking for evidence that I'm some sort of witch or robot," she said to Ferenci. "Why?"

"Well, the pump at the candy factory, the knife that wouldn't slice thick, the German band that went upstairs to take a nap, the kitchen that got cleaned up so fast . . . how do you explain things like that?"

"I've explained them all to you," Nanny replied. "But," she went on, "if you want proof, I'll just have to provide it, I suppose." She pointed to the note pad. "I've made out a list," she told Ferenci. "It's time to begin preparing for dinner and these are all the things that have to be done. Instead of doing them myself, I'll direct you in doing them. That way, you'll find out how things can really fly, if you set your mind to it."

Ferenci did not look particularly enthusiastic. "Maybe, instead, I ought to help the Germans with their nap," he said. "After all, they're guests . . ."

"They'll manage alone," Nanny assured him. "Napping, I understand, is the same in America as it is in Germany." She turned her attention to the list. "First, you'll peel the potatoes, peel the onions and fire the charcoal."

"Fire the . . ."

"I've planned a cook-out," Nanny explained. "The potatoes and onions will be for the potato salad. I understand that Germans are quite fond of German potato salad."

"That sounds logical enough," Ferenci replied. "What else will I have to do?"

"Potatoes, onions and charcoal first," she told him. "After that, we'll talk about what's next. The secret, you see, is to be well-organized. Never fret about second things until after you've done first things first." She looked at her watch. "Oh, my! See what all this talk has done! You're 'way behind schedule."

Ferenci leaped up. "What first?"

"You couldn't possibly catch up," Nanny told him. "So, this once, I'll pitch in and help you. I'll peel the potatoes and onions, while you fire the charcoal." She rose. "You'll find the charcoal and starter in the garage," she said to Ferenci. "And the grill, of course, is in the rear yard. Hurry . . ."

Ferenci dashed out the back door. On the way out, he realized that he had been manipulated. His intention had been to stay near Nanny and observe her, hoping to find out whether she was a witch or a robot. Clearly, she had outwitted him. And that raised another possibility. Perhaps, it occurred to him, she was merely human but a bit more clever. With that as a possibility, he wondered if he really wanted to know the truth.

A short while after Ferenci had departed, Professor Everett entered the kitchen. He was accompanied by Butch and Prudence. And they were carrying the chimney and firebox that the Professor had built. In all, it was approximately six feet in length, and maneuvering it through the doorways and around the furnishings was somewhat difficult.

Nanny, who was peeling onions, stopped and

watched. "It's very attractive . . . for a smokestack," she commented.

"Thank you," Professor Everett replied, steering the firebox past the table. "It isn't especially supposed to be attractive, though. It's a crude job. But it will serve the purpose, I hope. I have . . ."

The smokestack end cleared a number of jars containing spices from the counter and knocked them into the sink, where the jars broke and the spices scattered.

"I'm *very* sorry," Professor Everett said to Nanny.

"Quite all right," she replied. "It's really not important, since it's in the interest of clean air."

"It sure polluted the sink, though," Butch said.

"It was your end that did it," Professor Everett said. "Be a little more careful from now on, please."

"Our end is attached to your end," Prudence told him. "It was your end that made the mistake. Our end didn't even know what it was doing."

"Parents always get the blame, no matter what," Nanny said to the Professor.

He laughed. "Maybe it was my fault," he said. He spoke to Butch and Prudence again. "Swing a little bit in the other direction," he said. "That will get us a way from the counter."

The children moved a few steps.

"Okay. Forward!" the Professor said.

As he advanced, the end he was carrying knocked over a chair and then swept a jar of mustard, a jar of mayonnaise, a salt shaker, a pepper grinder, and a jar of pickles to the floor. The jars broke. A mixture of mayonnaise, mustard and pickle juice began spreading out across the floor like a living blob.

"That's terrible!" the Professor said. "I'm awfully sorry. I don't know how it happened!"

Nanny remained calm. "It happened because you

ere watching the children's end instead of your wn," she informed him.

"I guess I was."

"Well . . ." Nanny said, looking at the mess on the loor. "Actually, I was going to mix them all together, nyway. I suppose being charitable, we could look on his accident as a time-saver."

"You mean you're going to scoop it up and use it?" he Professor asked, wincing.

"I probably would except for what's going to hapen before you and the children get the smokestack ut into the yard," she answered. Then she explained. One or more of you will undoubtedly walk in it," he said.

"Oh, no," Professor Everett replied. "No more acidents. From now on, we won't move an inch until ve're sure where we're going and what's going to appen." He looked back over his shoulder, toward he door. "The angle is wrong," he said to the chilren. "Back up a couple steps and we'll aim ourselves little more to the . . . that's right, that's better," he aid, as the children began retreating. "Now, okay, old it. Now, we come this way again. Are you all ight . . . are you staying with me?"

"We'll just follow your tracks," Prudence said.

The Professor halted and looked toward the chilren. "My tracks?"

"You walked through all the glop on the floor," Butch advised him.

Professor Everett looked down. Then he raised his yes and looked at Nanny. "You *knew* that was going o happen," he said. "How?"

"Well, considering what had happened before," she eplied, "it seemed inevitable."

The Professor thought for a second, then nodded

agreement. "It *had* to happen," he said. He addressed Butch and Prudence once more. "Here we go again," he said. "And try to be a little more careful."

"You're the one . . ." Butch began.

But the Professor was on the move again, backing toward the doorway and motioning for the children to follow.

"Hard left!" Nanny called to Professor Everett.

Obeying, he managed to avoid knocking the tea kettle from the stove.

"Steady as you go!" Nanny commanded. "Now, then, out the door."

Professor Everett and the firebox disappeared through the opening. Seconds later, the children and the chimney followed.

"Sail on! Sail on!" Nanny called after them.

Ferenci Vanalps had just completed lighting the charcoal in the outdoor grill when Professor Everett and the children and the chimney emerged from the house. He stood staring at them in astonishment as they approached.

"It is a trap of some kind?" Ferenci asked when they got near.

While setting the firebox and smokestack up, Professor Everett explained what they were and what he intended to use them for. Pointing toward the top of the chimney, he said, "There's a container up there. I'll put my anti-pollution solution in it. Then when the smoke passes through the chemical it will be purified."

"Which will be purified?"

"The smoke," Professor Everett replied.

"It won't work," Ferenci told him. "You forget that the atmosphere is polluted with noise, too. Aircraft noise, for instance. And when your solution is

nywhere near a loud noise, as we learned, it has a ter-minal fainting spell."

Professor Everett shook his head. "Only in the nitial stage," he replied. "After it sets, nothing both-rs it." He looked at his watch. "The new batch has et by now," he said. "I'll get it and bring it out and ve'll find out if it works."

As the Professor walked toward the house, Ferenci alled to him. "Shall I start a fire for you?"

"Thanks . . . that would help," Professor Everett eplied. Then he reached the house and entered by the ear door.

"I wonder—" Prudence began.

"Shh!" Butch broke in.

From inside the house came a cry of disgust.

"I wanted to hear him when he stepped in the nayonnaise again," Butch explained to Prudence.

Ferenci began dumping charcoal into the firebox. "I ound out what you meant about Nanny," he said to he children. "I went into the kitchen to study her while she worked but she didn't give me a chance. Be-ore I actually realized what was happening, I was on ny way out the door. And I'm sure that if I went ack in right now and demanded to know how it hap-ened, she'd be able to convince me that I talked my-elf into it."

"How did it happen?" Prudence asked.

"That's the most puzzling part," Ferenci replied. "I ave the oddest feeling that I *did* talk myself into it."

"You're right," Butch said. "Now you know what ve meant about her."

Ferenci doused the charcoal with lighting fluid. It's a shame your father won't go into politics," he aid to the children. "Do you have any influence with im? Why don't you encourage him?"

"We have a deal with him," Butch replied. "He

doesn't throw out our old comic books and we don't tell him how to run his life."

Ferenci struck a match, then touched the flame to the lighting fluid. The fluid caught fire and began to burn brightly. "I suppose that's a practical arrangement for small children and a parent to have," he said. "However, I think you ought to consider . . . well, nevermind," he said, seeing that Professor Everett had emerged from the house and was returning.

"How does it look?" Professor Everett said, nearing them, holding up the beaker of anti-pollution solution.

"Gunky," Prudence replied.

"That's the way it's suppose to look," he told her.

"What will you do with it after it has served its purpose?" Ferenci asked. "If you dump it, it will certainly pollute whatever you dump it in."

Professor Everett frowned. "That's a thought," he said. Then he brightened. "But there'll be less of it," he said. "A batch this size," he went on, holding up the beaker, "ought to last for . . . oh, at least a year." He looked at the charcoal. "That's a good start," he said to Ferenci. "As soon as some of the coals begin to get white, we'll make some smoke."

"Could we make smoke signals, like Indians?" Prudence asked.

"Some other time," her father replied. "I don't want to do anything that might ruin this experiment." He looked toward the top of the chimney. "The filter is up at that end," he said. "I'll have to get up there somehow to add this solution." He handed the beaker to Ferenci. "Will you hold this for me, please?" he said. "I'll get a ladder from the garage."

Ferenci accepted the beaker from him. "If this works and if I get married some day and have children and then my children have children, I can tell my

grandchildren I held your anti-pollution solution for you," he said.

"That's something to look forward to—all of it," the Professor said, heading for the garage.

Professor Everett had been gone only a few minutes when the back door opened and Nanny stepped out and walked toward the grill area. As she got close to them, she looked questioningly at Ferenci.

"He's doing that for his grandchildren," Prudence advised her.

Nanny decided not to seek further information. To Ferenci, she said, "How long do you think it will be before we can start the grilling?"

He looked toward the coals in the grill. "Any time," he replied.

"Fine," Nanny smiled. "The other food is ready. So, shall we invite our guests to join us?"

"You mean you want me to wake that German band?" Ferenci asked, sounding somewhat leery of the idea.

"Well, someone will have to wake them," Nanny replied, "unless, of course, we wait for Prince Charming to come along and do the job for us."

"It probably won't happen," Ferenci said glumly.

"I agree," Nanny said. "So, since you speak the language so well, that would appear to settle the task on you, eh?"

Ferenci indicated the beaker. "I'm an integral part of a history-making scientific experiment," he said.

Nanny lifted the beaker from his hands. "Now, you don't have *that* to worry about."

Ferenci looked at the beaker, then at the grill, then at the coals in the firebox. "Promise not to start the smoking without me?" he said.

Nanny nodded, smiling.

"My grandchildren would never forgive me if I

missed the part where the smoke goes up," Ferenci said, walking toward the house.

Ferenci had been gone only a short while when the Professor returned, carrying a stepladder. As he set it up beside the chimney, he said to Nanny, "What happened to my other holder? Did he get called away to an emergency protest somewhere?"

Nanny explained that Ferenci had gone to wake the members of the band.

Like Ferenci, Professor Everett looked a little apprehensive. "It's been so peaceful . . ." he said.

"Well, after all, they are having an exciting adventure, being stranded," Nanny said. "I think it would be unfair, really, to let them sleep through it."

"Yes, I suppose so . . ."

The Professor took the beaker from Nanny, then climbed the ladder. When he reached the top of the chimney, he looked down into it. "Still there," he reported.

"What? The inside of the chimney?" Nanny asked. "You didn't actually think it would leave without the outside, did you?"

"The filter," he replied. "The filter is still in there." He poured the solution into the top of the smokestack. "And now it's soaking up anti-pollution solution," he said. He looked into the chimney once more, then started down.

"When will you get a result?" Nanny asked.

"After I send some smoke up through it," the Professor replied, reaching the ground. "I'll trap some of the smoke and I'll analyze it and . . . well, if the solution works, the smoke ought to be relatively poison-free." He turned to the children. "Here's something you can do for me," he said. "Find a lot of glass jars with lids. The lids will have to fit on tightly. I want . . ."

There was a sudden crashing sound from the direction of the house. The ground trembled. Nanny and the Professor and the children were struck speechless and motionless for several moments. Then, as the sound continued, they understood what was happening. The band was playing again.

"What started it this time?" Professor Everett shouted to Nanny over the noise.

"The same thing, I imagine . . . Mr. Vanalps' command of the language," she answered.

"Will Hal and the police come back, Daddy?" Prudence asked.

"I wouldn't be surprised."

"Just as well, it's time for Hal to come home, anyway," Nanny said. "I'm sure he wouldn't want to miss dinner."

"What's a little thing like dinner to a dedicated law-enforcer?" the Professor shouted. "Would J. Edgar Hoover leave right in the middle of making up the Ten Most Wanted list just because his nanny was calling him to dinner?"

The back door of the house flew open. Ferenci Vanalps dashed out, then raced toward the grill area. The tuba player, then the other members of the band, followed and trailed after him.

"I ask you!" Ferenci said, furious. "Does 'Soup's on!' sound anything at all like 'Strike up the band!' "

"The way you say it in German, apparently it does," the Professor replied. "Try telling them to play the 'March of the Toy Soldiers,' " he said. "Maybe that will quiet them down."

"I'm not speaking to them," Ferenci said, his indignation increasing.

The German band reached them and began marching around them in a circle. The band members

looked rested and happy. They were clearly enjoying themselves at the moment.

"Isn't anybody going to do anything?" the Professor asked, shouting to be heard.

"If Mr. Vanalps would only talk to them," Nanny said. "They might be able to understand him better now."

"Not one word!" Ferenci said, turning around and around in a vain effort to keep his back to the circling Germans.

"I know what I'm going to do!" Professor Everett said. "I've got an experiment in the works! And if I don't continue with it, everything I've done so far will be wasted! So, I'm going to ignore that band and keep right on with the experiment!" He motioned to Butch and Prudence to get their attention. "Jars!" he said. "The jars—remember?"

Butch and Prudence indicated that they understood, then ran off toward the house.

Professor Everett looked at the coals in the firebox. "Coming along nicely," he shouted to Ferenci. "If you want to help, you can get me some branches from the trees. Green leaves are great for creating smoke."

"What?" Ferenci shouted back.

"I said . . . Forget it! I'll get them myself," the Professor replied. He headed toward a small grove of low trees at the other end of the yard.

Ferenci and Nanny followed him.

And the band followed all of them.

"I still don't know what you said," Ferenci bellowed at the Professor.

"Forget it!" the Professor shouted in reply.

"I might as well start the food," Nanny said. "Perhaps, if we're fortunate, it will be ready before the band stops playing. It's always nice, don't you think?, to have music with dinner."

"Delightful!" Professor Everett shouted.

Nanny left, turning toward the house.

Professor Everett and Ferenci Vanalps and the German band reached the collection of trees. The Professor looked up toward the branches, and then began selecting leaves. Ferenci stood by, looking miserable. The band began marching in a circle again, with Ferenci and the Professor in the center.

"The terrible thing is, I think they think we're enjoying this," Ferenci said.

"They look happy," Professor Everett agreed.

"Do you suppose . . ." Ferenci said, glaring at the circling Germans. "Could this be some kind of horrible revenge for World War II?" He looked appalled "Maybe they're not really stranded. Maybe they were sent here to . . ." He interrupted himself, then pointed toward the far end of the yard. "You're being invaded," he said to the Professor. "And they don't look like music-lovers."

The Professor looked. At least two dozen people were striding across the yard. He recognized several of them. They were neighbors, who, as a result of Hal's industriousness, had received summonses.

"On the contrary," Professor Everett said. "I think they *are* music lovers. They looked outraged. And it's what this band is doing that's the cause of it, I imagine."

"They seem to be after you," Ferenci said. The idea appeared to cheer him slightly. "Yes, that fist-shaking and that screeching—it's directed at you!"

Professor Everett stopped picking leaves and listened. Ferenci was right, he realized; his name was being used. The neighbors seemed to be blaming him for the noise the band was making.

"A misunderstanding . . ." the Professor said to Ferenci.

"In time, I think it'll probably be called a gross misunderstanding," Ferenci told him. "Because, interpreting that look in their eyes, I think they intend to lynch you."

Professor Everett looked again. "Non . . ."

"Then explain the rope!" Ferenci challenged.

There was no opportunity at that moment to reply. The crowd of neighbors reached the area. They began circling the band that was circling Professor Everett and Ferenci Vanalps, shaking their firsts at the Professor, shouting threats. They were so loud, it was nearly impossible to hear the music.

"You're right! I'm with you!" Ferenci shouted back at the neighbors.

"What are you doing?" the Professor demanded.

"This is for your own good," Ferenci told him. "If we can get them to attack, I can make your name a household word overnight! Do you realize who those people are?"

"Yes, some of them," Professor Everett replied, peeking out between the passing band members. "There's Mrs. Alexander, cast-iron weather vane, and Mrs. Halloran, parked too far from the curb . . ."

"Not their names!" Ferenci said. "I mean do you know who they are symbolically? They're the people who abhore violence, right?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Don't you see?" Ferenci said. "If we can get them to attack you and beat you to a pulp, you can become a 'name' overnight." He shouted out to the neighbors again. "Hit that line! Find a hole! There, right there, between the fife and the drum! Ah-ah—missed it!"

"Stop that!" Professor Everett commanded. "I don't want to be a 'name'! Especially not that way!"

"Believe me, when you're a 'name,' you'll thank me for this," Ferenci told him. He began motioning to the

irate neighbors. "Form a battering ram!" he called to them.

Just then, though, the neighbors suddenly became distracted. They stopped circling and started gathering in a group. Professor Everett and Ferenci saw that Nanny had arrived. She was carrying a tin on which there were a number of raw steaks and was addressing the neighbors.

"Can you hear what she's saying?" Professor Everett asked Ferenci.

"No, but I can guess," he replied. "See those steaks? She's telling them that if any of them get black eyes when they're trying to lynch you, she'll sell them the steaks for the eyes at a cut-rate price. Believe me, I've seen it happen time and time again. Whenever something happens in public, somebody sets up a stand and tries to make a buck out of it."

"Not Nanny."

"Usually it's somebody you never suspect," Ferenci said. "I remember . . ."

"Look!" the Professor said, sounding pleased. "Whatever it was she said to them, it worked!"

The neighbors were now smiling. Several of them turned and waved to the Professor in a friendly way. A number of others were keeping time to the music, seeming to be enjoying themselves.

"She did it again," Ferenci said woefully. "The kids warned me she always gets things to turn out the way she wants. And watch," he said to the Professor, "she'll probably have a reasonable and logical explanation for it, too."

"Well, you'll get to hear it soon," Professor Everett said.

The neighbors were heading toward the other end of the yard, the grill area. They were laughing and talking, in a party mood. And, even more surpising

the band was marching along with them, leaving Professor Everett and Ferenci Vanalps under the trees.

"Surely, you're going to join the party," Nanny said to them.

"It was that easy?" Ferenci said. "You turned those irate citizens into friendly revelers just by inviting them to a party?"

"Hardly," Nanny replied.

"Aha . . . it took magic!" Ferenci said. "Admit it! Magic!"

"No, not that, either," she answered, laughing. "I simply explained the situation to them. I told them that the band is stranded. Well, of course, most of them had read about it in the newspaper. And when they learned that the Professor had opened his home to these lost wayfarers, well . . ."

"Don't tell me any more," Ferenci pleaded. "Sentiment always gives me a terrible throbbing sensation at the base of the skull."

"Sorry I can't stay and sympathize with you," Nanny said. "But unless I deliver these steaks, I'm afraid our guests will begin to lose their enthusiasm for the party." She smiled encouragingly at Ferenci. "Don't look so distraught," she said. "Come along. Put on a party face . . ."

Ferenci seemed to shrivel inwardly. "This *is* my party face," he said. "I hate parties."

CHAPTER NINE

When Nanny and the Professor and Ferenci Vanalps reached the grill area, Nanny began preparing the food. The German band was still playing. Most of the neighbors were standing around in small groups talking and laughing.

"They're really enjoying themselves," Ferenci said to the Professor, indicating the neighbors. "And I feel absolutely helpless. There's nothing I can do about it."

"You mean it bothers you?" the Professor said.

"While there is grief and injustice in the world, no man has the right to be happy," Ferenci replied.

"Not even just to keep in practice for the time when all the grief and injustice have passed?"

Ferenci looked at him disappointedly. "I'm wasting my time on you, I can see that," he said. "And I had such great hopes. You have this comfortable house,

you apparently make a nice living, and you have a naturally accommodating nature. I more or less dreamed of settling down here and making a career of promoting you for public office every four years. But . . ." His voice quavered. "You don't deserve me," he said.

As Professor Everett was about to reply, Butch and Prudence approached, carrying the jars he had asked for. He turned his attention to them. "Did you make sure that all the lids fit tightly?" he asked.

"Some of them won't even come off," Butch reported. "Is that tight enough?"

The Professor laughed. "We'll save those for an emergency," he said.

Butch frowned. "So that's what that means!" he said.

"What what means?" Ferenci asked him.

Butch held up one of the jars. "That sign that says 'Break glass in case of Emergency,'" he replied. He looked perplexed. "I still don't understand how it will help, though," he said.

Ferenci made a sound of minor anguish in his throat, then said, "Excuse me," to the Professor and the children, and left them, moving toward the grill, where Nanny, assisted by some of the neighbors, was continuing with the work of getting the food ready.

Professor Everett picked up a small stick and poked at the coals in the firebox. "We're about ready," he said to Prudence and Butch. He indicated the leaves he had collected and placed near the base of the firebox. "I'll drop some of these on the coals," he told them, "and that will create the smoke. Then, after it passes through the chemical, I'll trap some of it in jars— Oh, hello, there," he said to a neighbor who had approached and was listening interestedly to what he was saying.

"Smoked leaves," the neighbor, a woman, said to him excitedly. "I think that's a wonderful idea. It will give the party a festival air. The Greeks, I think, always use smoked grape leaves." She peered at the leaves that the Professor had collected. "Oh, well, it's the thought that counts," she said.

Professor Everett was shaking his head. "This is an experiment . . ." he began.

"I know!" she told him, breaking in. "We all had the wrong idea at first. But Nanny, bless her, explained it to us. And I think it's marvelous. *Really* marvelous. An experiment in international brotherhood, that's what it is. You learned that these people were in trouble and you took them in, in spite of the fact that they are foreigners and musicians. I salute you!"

The Professor was still shaking his head. The neighbor, however, evidently had no interest in his response. She headed back toward the grill area without giving him a chance to tell her what he had actually been talking about when he had mentioned an experiment.

"Do we know her?" Professor Everett asked the children.

"I guess we must," Prudence replied. "She knows us."

"Well, anyway, as I was saying . . ." the Professor began.

He was interrupted once more. The intruder this time was another neighbor, but a man. He was large, with bright, sparkling eyes and a tomato-red face. "I'm sure you'll want to give," he said to the Professor, holding out a big glass mug.

Professor Everett looked into the mug. It contained money, mostly bills. He raised his eyes to the man who was holding it. "What's it for?" he asked.

"A collection, of course," the man replied cheerily. "You've shown us the way. We want to come to the rescue of these poor foreign musicians. So, we're getting together a fund to pay their passage back to where they came from." He shook the mug. "Anything at all that you want to contribute," he said.

Professor Everett shrugged, then dug into his pocket. "It's nice of you to go to the trouble . . . I suppose . . ." he said.

"Actually," the man replied, lowering his voice, "I'll be a bit more comfortable when they're on their way. After all, what do we *really* know about them? They're musicians, we know that. But how do we know that they're really a German band? For all we know, yesterday they might have been a rock 'n' roll group, with hair down to their shoulders." He glanced toward the band. "My feeling about it is that we can't be too careful," he said, "and anything we contribute to the cause to get them out of town will undoubtedly be well worth it."

Professor Everett dropped a bill into the mug.

"You're okay, fella," the man told him. "I wondered about you when I heard you were sending your kid around to arrest everybody with a two-story house. But this makes up for it." He moved on, heading for another group to continue collecting for the cause.

"There goes a man with a heart as big as all indoors," the Professor said to Prudence and Butch. "If all that compassion for humanity could be . . ." He broke in on himself, then cocked an ear. "What's that?" he said.

"It's not the band," Prudence replied. "They stopped playing."

Professor Everett looked toward the grill area and discovered why the music had suddenly ceased. The

band members had stopped playing to eat. They were crowding around a table, piling paper plates with food.

"Everybody's getting something to eat but us," Prudence complained. "Can we hear about your experiment for about the millionth time a little later, Daddy?" she asked.

"What? Oh, yes."

Prudence and Butch ran toward the grill area, where the food was being served. At the same time, Nanny and Ferenci Vanalps appeared from the crowd of neighbors and band members around the tables and walked toward where the Professor was standing.

"Mr. Vanalps has decided to move on," Nanny said to the Professor as they approached. "We've failed him miserably, it seems."

"Sorry to say, the whole experience has been one disappointment after another," Ferenci said sorrowfully to the Professor. He nodded toward Nanny. "I found a slave but I can't persuade her to cast off her bonds." He focused on the Professor again. "You, you're being persecuted and harassed right and left by the police and your own son but I can't even get you to admit it, let alone fight back." He waved in the direction of the neighbors. "And them . . . For a second, I thought they were going to reveal their true selves. When they came tearing across the yard, I was positive they would rip you limb from limb. But . . ." he blinked away a tear, "look at you. You're still whole, not a rip, not a tear, not a scratch . . ."

"If you're ever in the neighborhood again," the Professor replied, smiling, "be sure and stop in. And, in the meantime, in the event that something terrible might happen to me, is there somewhere we could reach you to give you the good news?"

"You joke," Ferenci said. "You don't really understand me." He shrugged. "Ah, well, that's the story of my life. Nobody understands me—the F.B.I. doesn't understand me, the Justice Department doesn't understand me . . . I dread getting married," he said. "It's inevitable that my wife won't understand me." He started moving away. "Say goodbye for me to Butch and Prudence," he said. "And to your other son, too, the fingerman for the fuzz."

"Aren't you forgetting?" Nanny said. "Aren't you going to say goodbye to the band?"

He halted. "I suppose it wouldn't hurt to treat them to a phrase or two more in their native tongue," he said. "As a matter of fact, I have a farewell speech that I've never been able to use . . ." He seemed happier. "I'm glad I thought of it before I got away," he said. "I *will* say goodbye to them."

Ferenci Vanalps headed toward the grill area where the Germans were standing, eating. Nanny, smiling to herself, tagged after him. And the Professor, made curious by the way Nanny was smiling, followed the two of them.

Approaching the members of the band, Ferenci addressed them in high school German. They immediately gave him their full attention.

"Step to the rear of the bus," the tuba player said, replying to Ferenci's statement, reading from his phrase book.

Ferenci responded in high school German. As he spoke, he made broad gestures. The Germans stared at him, as they had before, in complete bafflement. Ferenci was not deterred by the obvious fact that they did not understand what he was telling them, however. He talked on and on and on.

Professor Everett whispered to Nanny. "Do you have any idea how much longer . . ."

"Judging by the rhythm," she whispered back, "I think he's winding up, coming to the end, that is . . ."

Ferenci raised a hand, as if to wave a final goodbye. Then, with tears in his eyes, he spoke the last few words. At the same moment, the Professor noticed that Nanny looked straight at Ferenci's lips, and smiled again, mischievously this time.

The members of the band suddenly looked interested. They appeared to have understood what Ferenci had said as he spoke his final farewell. Ferenci himself looked slightly stunned. Being understood was a completely new and unexpected, and unsettling, experience for him.

The tuba player beamed at Ferenci. "Pedestrians not allowed on Bridge!" he announced.

A cheer rose from the other members of the band.

Ferenci backed away. "Whatever I said, I didn't mean it!" he told the Germans.

But they were no longer listening. They were busy picking up their instruments and cases.

Ferenci continued to retreat, moving faster.

The tuba player discovered that he was departing and called after him. "No bicycle riding on the sidewalk!"

Ferenci's state of panic was such that he could not respond.

The tuba player shouted a command to the other players. Once more, the band began playing. The tuba player signalled. And the band began marching, following Ferenci, who was now in full flight.

Ferenci disappeared around a corner of the house.

The band, playing full blast, marched after him and disappeared from sight.

Professor Everett and Nanny and the children and the neighbors stood listening, not speaking. The music

of the band could be heard for quite a while. Then finally it faded out completely. For a short time there was complete silence in the back yard. Then someone sighed. After that, the conversation and the eating resumed.

"I wonder what your friend Mr. Vanalps said to them," Professor Everett said to Nanny, looking at her speculatively.

"Well, since I don't speak German, I can't very well say, can I?" she replied.

The Professor frowned. "Perhaps we ought to go after them," he said. "They're our guests, so I suppose we're responsible for them."

"You mean you think they'll get lost?" Nanny said. "A German band? That size? Trailing Ferenci Vanalps through town?"

Professor Everett laughed. "It's just possible, I suppose," he said, "that somebody may spot them." His expression suddenly changed. "That somebody may bring them back here, too," he said.

"I have an idea," Nanny said teasingly. "Let's leave the country! A trip to Germany might be nice. We'd feel rather at home there, don't you think?"

The Professor laughed again. "I'll keep it in mind," he said. "Right now, though," he said, "if you and . . ." he nodded toward the neighbors, "—the rest of the guests will excuse me, I'll get back to my experiment."

"I think I'll join you," Nanny replied. "I can eat anytime. How often, though, does one get the opportunity to be present at the creation of a marvelous new anti-pollution solution?"

"Not very," Professor Everett replied.

When they reached the smokestack, Professor Everett poked at the coals again with the small stick he

had used before. The prodding produced an orange glow.

"Ripe," he said. He picked up the leaves he had dropped when he left to listen to Ferenci Vanalps' farewell address. "Will you call Prudence and Butch over?" he said. "They'd never forgive me if they missed the smoke."

Nanny called to the children, then motioned, and they left the table, where they had been eating, and ran toward her. "I wish Hal were here," she said to the Professor. "But, I suppose a truly dedicated law-enforcer rarely has time for anything else. When one is leading a crusade against cast-iron weather vanes and towering two-story houses, smoke-ogling, I imagine, seems rather unexciting."

The Professor, carefully tossing green leaves onto the coals, merely nodded.

"Didn't you tell me once that there's a law against burning leaves?" Butch said, as he and Prudence arrived.

"I was talking about dry leaves and in large amounts," his father replied. "Besides, I'm not burning leaves."

They watched him toss more leaves onto the coals.

"If that's not burning leaves, what is it?" Prudence asked bafflledly.

"This is called 'conducting an experiment,'" Professor Everett answered.

"So far, so good, too," Nanny said. "Those are very nice little curls of smoke you're getting. They're very artistic, really."

Professor Everett glanced at her, then bent down and blew on the coals. When he straightened up he added more leaves.

"Hey, here it comes!" Butch said enthusiastically, as

a big billow of smoke puffed up from the leaves and then disappeared up the chimney.

Two of the neighbors joined them. One of them was the large, tomato-faced man who had been taking up the collection to help the Germans return to their homeland.

"You're not doing that right," the tomato-faced man said to the Professor. "It's smoking. Your problem, I think, is all those leaves you've got on there."

Professor Everett looked at the man coldly. Then Nanny took him aside to explain to him what it was the Professor was doing. When she finished, the man looked at Professor Everett suspiciously for a few moments, then, shaking his head, he ambled back toward the grill area.

"Oh, *very* nice!" Nanny said, when she was able to return her attention to the experiment.

Great puffs of white smoke were rising from the leaves and emerging from the top of the smokestack. Since there was no breeze, a haze was forming over the back yard.

"It's even better than I expected," Professor Everett replied. He reached out toward Prudence. "Bottle," he said.

She placed a bottle in his hand.

"Cap," he said.

Prudence put the cap in his hand. "Shouldn't you be wearing rubber gloves, doctor," she said. "If you have something catching, the smoke might get it."

The Professor ignored the comment. Taking the bottle and cap with him, he began climbing the ladder toward the top of the smokestack.

"When you get up there," Butch said, "stir up the smoke and see if you can see if we still have a sky."

"Nothing has happened to the sky," his father assured him.

"How do we know? We can't see it."

"Take my word for it," Professor Everett said. Having reached the top of the ladder, he held the open bottle over the opening in the smokestack and collected a sample of smoke. Pleased, he quickly capped the bottle. "Catch!" he said, dropping it to Butch. "Then toss me another one."

At that moment, the tomato-faced man tapped on Nanny's shoulder. "Give to a good cause," he said, holding out the glass mug that contained the money he had been collecting for the Germans.

"Too much and too late," she said to him, looking at the money. "The band marched off, remember?"

"This is for a long trip for a crazy scientist we have in the neighborhood," the man replied. "This smog we're getting is man-made. I was talking to a girl who works for him and she tells me that this crazy scientist . . . oh, you're the girl, aren't you?" he said, blinking at Nanny through the haze. "Forget what I said." He turned, started to move away and bumped into a large man who was wearing a blue uniform. "Give to a good cause," he said to the man. "This is for . . ."

"I gave at the precinct," the man in blue replied, moving past him.

Nanny, recognizing a familiar face, waved. "Over here!" she called. The man in blue was the older policeman who had been accompanying Hal. As he approached, responding to her call, she saw that the younger policeman was right behind him. Finally, Hal, third in line, appeared from out of the thickening haze.

"All right, who's the perpetrator!" the older policeman demanded.

"Who's that down there?" Professor Everett asked from the top of the ladder.

"Are you the perpetrator?" the older policeman bellowed up at him.

Hal intervened. "It's me, Hal, and the police, Dad," he said. "If this is your smoke, it's a violation of the law."

There was silence from on high for a moment. Then the Professor answered. "I'm coming down," he said.

Prudence addressed Hal. "Boy, are you wrong if you think we're burning leaves," she said.

He pointed to the smoldering leaves in the firebox. "What's that?" he asked.

"Oh, those are leaves," she admitted. "But there's a big difference between burning leaves and burning leaves." She suddenly looked less certain. "Anyway, Daddy says there's a difference," she àdded.

The Professor had reached the ground. He handed the capped jar he was holding to Butch, then smiled amiably at the two policemen and his oldest son. "I know what you're thinking," he said. He chuckled. "You probably think I'm burning leaves," he said. "Now, I'm aware that burning leaves is against the law. And it's a *good* law. Leaf-burning creates pollution. There is no one, believe me, who dislikes pollution more than I do. This, as a matter of fact," he said, pointing to the firebox and chimney, "may be an important step toward ending pollution."

The older policeman was shaking his head in wonder. "I've seen some brazen law-breaking in my day," he said to the Professor, "but you win the prize."

Professor Everett looked at him blankly.

"Dad, it does sound a little strange," Hal said. "There's a law, you know, against polluting. And you're breaking it. And while you're doing it, you're telling us that there's nobody who dislikes pollution more than you do."

The Professor turned to Nanny. "What's he talking about?" he asked.

She pointed to the smoke that was still billowing from the chimney.

The Professor looked up. "That?" he said. He faced Hal and the policemen again. "That isn't polluting," he told them. "I'm doing that to get samples." He retrieved a jar from Butch and showed it to them. "See that white smoky stuff inside?" he said. "That's a sample."

"It looks like smoke," the older policeman replied.

"It is. It's a sample of smoke."

"Okay, Dad, but you're still polluting," Hal said. "And it's a violation of the anti-pollution law."

"Polluting?" The Professor shook his head. "I'm conducting an experiment," he said. "As part of that experiment, I'm collecting smoke samples. But I am *not* polluting." He abruptly broke out in laughter. "When I explain something," he said to the older policeman, "I think you'll see how ridiculous this is. You see, what I'm doing here is: I'm conducting an experiment that, if it's successful, will probably end the dangers of smoke pollution. And you, unaware of what's really going on, are accusing me of *creating* smoke pollution." He broke out in laughter once more.

Nanny smiled. Otherwise, though, none of the others seemed to understand what was so humorous.

"Don't you see?" the Professor said, sobering. "How can I be causing pollution when what I'm doing is aimed at ending pollution?"

The older policeman pointed upward toward the heavy layer of haze overhead. "What's that?" he asked.

"That's smoke."

"That's how. No matter what you *say* you're

doing, you're causing pollution," the policeman informed him.

Professor Everett faced the others, seeking understanding. "How can I possibly be polluting . . ." he began. He saw that it would be pointless to continue.

Prudence came to his defense. "Maybe we're causing pollution," she said, "but you can't say we're burning leaves."

"This whole family has a very strange slant on things," the older policeman said. "Lucky, though," he added, "it's not catching." He got a folded paper from his pocket and put it into the Professor's hand. "You see that?" he said. "It looks like a summons, don't it? It feels like a summons, too, I guess. And, if you taste it and you know anything about how a summons tastes, it'll taste like a summons, no doubt. That's because it *is* a summons. It's not the evening newspaper. And it's not a contract to build a bridge over the bridge over the San Francisco Bay. It's a plain, ordinary summons."

Professor Everett hefted the paper. "It *does* have the feel of a summons," he replied. "I remember how that one you gave me this morning felt."

"Now, you've got a matched pair," the policeman said pleasantly. He pointed toward the smoldering leaves in the firebox. "And if you don't do something about that," he said, "you're going to be a three-time-loser—and before not very long, either."

"I believe it's my turn," Nanny said.

As the others watched, she went to the grill area and got a pitcher of liquid from a table. When she returned with it, she dumped the liquid on the leaves and coals. There was a hissing sound, then a few more puffs of smoke. After a few more seconds, the smoking ended.

The older policeman sniffed the air. "The odor of pollution improves with age," he said.

"I think that's the odor of the lemonade I poured on it," Nanny said.

"The smog is lifting," the Professor pointed out. He looked around. "We seem to have lost our guests," he said. "I hope they didn't go away angry."

"One thing is certain—they didn't go away hungry," Nanny said. "There's not a morsel of food left on the table."

"If you want my opinion on where they went," the older policeman said, "they probably went home to pack. They're fools if they stay around here. This boy here," he said, indicating Hal, "will have them drowning in summonses before the week is out." Then he smiled broadly. "But, the ordeal is over for me," he said. He pointed to his watch. "I'm off duty for the day," he went on. "And, as soon as I get back to the precinct, I'm going to ask for a transfer—*anywhere!* If I don't get it, I'll resign. The one thing I won't do no more is come back to this neighborhood tomorrow and hand out summonses for cast-iron weather vanes!"

Looking sheepish, Hal said, "You don't have to ask for a transfer. I'm retiring from law-enforcement."

Surprisingly, the policeman looked disappointed. "You don't have to go overboard, boy," he said. "If you don't mind a suggestion, why don't you just let up a bit. The truth is," he continued, "you had the right idea. The law isn't much good if it doesn't treat everybody alike. But playing games with law, the way you've been doing today, isn't such a bright idea, either."

"What you might do, Hal," Nanny said, "is devote some of your crusading zeal to getting those silly laws repealed."

"That might not be possible for a boy his age," the Professor said. "Don't forget, he'd be fighting the powerful Wright brothers and wooden weather vane lobbies."

Nanny laughed. "I'll help him," she said. "Together, I'm sure we'll be able to win through."

"Why am I standing around here, listening to all this plotting?" the older policeman said, addressing himself. "I'm off duty." He raised his cap to Nanny. "Good evening, ma'm," he said. "And the same to you, children," he added. Then, speaking to the Professor, he said, "And I'll be seeing you in court."

"I intend to fight both of these summonses," the Professor warned. "The first one is for playing the radio too loudly, which I was not doing."

"It's for disturbing the peace—by playing your stranded German band too loud," the policeman replied, correcting him.

"Well, maybe," the Professor conceded. "I still say I wasn't polluting, though. An experiment is not . . ." He threw up his hands, remembering how unsuccessful he had been in arguing the case before. "See you in court," he said to the policeman.

When the officers had gone, the Professor and Nanny and the children walked idly toward the grill area. It had been hastily abandoned after the food supply had been exhausted, and it looked it. Paper plates were scattered about. Empty baskets and bowls were here and there.

"The cupboard is bare," the Professor said glumly. "And, as I recall, I didn't even get lunch. I couldn't get into the kitchen. It seemed to be constantly occupied by a German band."

"There's just a chance," Nanny said, smiling, "that I might be able to find the makings of a meal somewhere in the house."

"You stashed something away," the Professor said, pleased. "Nanny, how did we ever survive without you?"

"Just barely," Hal said.

"Save the pretty phrases for sometime when I need them," Nanny said crisply. "As for now, let's clean up a bit here, then I'll see what I can find for dinner that's both left over and tasty."

They all began picking up the litter.

"You know, Dad," Butch said to the Professor, "when you first had that idea about good deeds this morning, I didn't think too much of it."

"I got that impression," Professor Everett replied.

"It worked out fine, though," Butch said. "I haven't felt klunky all day. I haven't had time to. Most days, during the summer, I always feel klunky at least once during a day. Not today, though."

"That may be the most impressive testimonial for good-deed-doing I've ever heard," his father said.

"The only thing is . . ." Butch said.

"Yes?"

"What'll we do tomorrow?" Butch asked. "Today, we had plenty to do . . . Prudence and I found that German band and Hal got a lot of people arrested and you quit making all that smoke after the cops made you. But that's about all the good deeds there are, isn't it? What's left?"

Nanny answered. "Directly after breakfast tomorrow, we'll all concentrate very hard," she said, "and perhaps we'll be able to come up with something else. It'll be a team effort."

"I doubt it," Prudence said. "We never should have let that band get away."

"Cheer up!" Nanny said, starting toward the house. "I'm sure that . . ." She halted, looking surprised.

"What is it?" the Professor asked.

"I think we just may not have to fret about what to do tomorrow," Nanny replied. "Listen!"

For a moment, the others heard nothing but the sounds of the evening. Then, faintly, very faintly, they heard the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet and the music of a German band.

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